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FAILURE STUDENTS SPEAK ABOUT SCHOOL

by

© ANNA SCHLOEGL

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Failure Students Speak About School' submitted by Anna Schloegl in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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Date September 19, 1973

ABSTRACT

This study was concerned with gathering first-hand information on how youngsters who failed in school assessed the academic subjects, and their relationship with teachers and peers in the regular school. It further inquired into perceived subject matter difficulty, and teacher and classmate relationships in their present vocational school, W. P. Wagner. Also investigated were the students' experiences resulting from attending a segregated school.

A sample of 80 pupils, 40 from the year I, and 40 from the year III program at Wagner, were interviewed in this survey. The 40 students in each of the stated school years were made up of 10 boys and 10 girls who came from low socio-economic homes (Classes 6 and 7 on the Blishen Scale), and 10 boys and 10 girls from other than low socio-economic background (Classes 1 to 5 on the Blishen Scale). As the majority of the students in Wagner had recorded IQ of 90 and above, all participants of this study were from the 90 and above segment.

The subjects' responses to five open-ended interview questions regarding their past and present school experience were taped and content analysed. The students' cumulative files were utilized to obtain data regarding the occupation of parents, family size, IQ, and school progress.

Examination of the school records disclosed that the majority of Wagner students were members of families with four or more children, their parents worked in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations, and despite their normal IQ, these pupils had failed to pass grades four or more times during the nine years in integrated school.

The analysis of the taped interviews found that these low achievers

considered their school career in the regular school system as stressful and frustrating in terms of subject matter difficulty, the resulting grade failure, and the unsatisfactory relationship with their teachers and peers. The analysis further revealed that most failure students judged the vocational orientated academic subjects in Wagner 'just right' in difficulty for them; they claimed their attitude to school learning has improved, their relationship with teachers is positive and encouraging, and interaction with classmates is friendly and rewarding.

The students were familiar with the stigma associated with Wagner attendance and had developed helpful reactions and rationalizations to overcome the unpleasant, demoralizing treatment of friends from the other schools and the general public.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background and Need	2
	Factors Contributing to Grade Failure	3
	The Present Study	5
	Research Questions	12
	Significance of Present Study	12
	Limitation of Study	13
II	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	14
	Factors Implicated in School Failure	14
	Prevalence of Potential School Failure	17
	Provision for Failing Pupils	18
	Teacher Attitudes to Grade Failures	21
	Peer Relationship	23
	Community Relationship	24
	Summary	25
III	RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE	26
	The Population	26
	Collection of Data	35
	Scoring	38
IV	DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTENT ANALYSIS	40
	Analysis of Data Concerning School History	43
	Analysis of Data Concerning Academic Subjects	46
	Analysis of Data Concerning Teacher Traits	48
	Analysis of Data Concerning Peer Relationship	52

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Analysis of Data Concerning Stigma	54
V	QUANTITATIVE RESULTS	56
	School History	56
	Subject Matter Difficulty	67
	Teacher Traits	70
	Peer Relationship	77
	Prevalent Opinions Regarding Wagner Attenders . . .	79
	Reliability	88
VI	QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTIONS OF DATA	89
	School History	89
	Categories of Stated Causes of Grade Failure . . .	90
	IQ Information with Pupils' Statements and Complete Replies	94
	Academic Subjects	97
	English	97
	Levels of Skill in English in the General School System	93
	Reported Level of Skills in English at Wagner .	99
	Mathematics	102
	Mathematics in Integrated School	103
	Mathematics in Wagner	103
	Teacher Traits	105
	'Good' Teachers in Integrated School	105
	'Poor' Teachers in Integrated School	107
	Traits of 'Good' Teachers in Wagner	111
	Traits of 'Poor' Teachers in Wagner	113
	Additional Categories Under Teacher Behavior	114

CHAPTER PAGE

Peer Relationship 116

Positive Peer Relationship in Integrated School . . 116

Negative Peer Relationship in Integrated School . . 117

Positive Peer Relationship in Wagner 119

Negative Peer Relationship in Wagner 120

Community Relationship 120

Contents of Opinions About Wagner 121

Responses to Outsiders' Opinions 124

VII SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS 127

Summary 127

Findings and Discussions 128

Suggestions for Further Research 137

Conclusion 138

* * *

BIBLIOGRAPHY 141

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Description	Page
1	Recorded IQ Levels of Year I and Year III Students of the W. P. Wagner High School in 1970	4
2	Socio-Economic Status of W. P. Wagner Students of "Normal" IQ in Year I and Year III in 1970	10
3	Age of Subjects, Socio-Economic Status, and Year of Attendance at W. P. Wagner High School	28
4	Number of Children in Subjects' Family and Socio-Economic Status of Parents	30
5	Occupation of Parents and Socio-Economic Status According to Sex and Year of Attendance at Wagner	32
6	IQ Levels of Group of W. P. Wagner Students Participating in The Study	34
7	Grade at Which Subjects First Failed and Following Class Placement	58
8	Causes of Grade Failure in Integrated School as Perceived by Students	64
9	Grade Failure in Relation to Social and Personal Adjustment and Curriculum Difficulty	66
10	Perceived Subject Matter Difficulty in Integrated School	68
11	Perceived Subject Matter Difficulty in Wagner	69
12	Perceived Teacher Attitudes in Integrated School and in W. P. Wagner High School	72
13	Perceived Teaching Style in Integrated School and in W. P. Wagner High School	74
14	Extent of Student Agreement Regarding the Prevalence of 'Better' Teachers in W. P. Wagner School	76
15	Kinds of Peer Relationships in Integrated School	78
16	Kinds of Peer Relationships in W. P. Wagner School	80
17	Content of Negative Opinions Regarding Wagner Attenders and to Whom They are Attributed	82

Table	Description	Page
18	Prevalence of Perceived Positive and Negative Opinions Regarding Wagner Attenders and to Whom They are Attributed	84
19	Rationalizations of, or Reactions to, Perceived Negative Opinions of Wagner Attenders and to Whom They are Attributed	86

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Prevalence of Subjects' Multiple Grade Failures From School Years One to Nine	60

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Failure in school is the result of many factors. Dull intelligence is one. Other factors are lack of academic motivation, emotional and social immaturity, social disadvantage, unstable home background, and inability to establish adequate working relationships with teachers and/or classmates (Wall, Schonell, & Olson, 1962, p. 1).

The consequences of unsatisfactory learning performance are manifold. Wall et al., (1962), in analysis of studies of the past fifty years dealing with children who had not obtained the set minimum academic standards for their age group, found that grade failure was costly in terms of immediate and future social and emotional adjustment of the individual.

As youngsters who experience grade failure are less likely to remain in school when they reach legal school leaving age, the economic consequences of their short school career have to be taken into account. Podoluk (1965, p. 44) demonstrated that in Canada the earning power of a person greatly depended on his level of education. College graduates' income was about twice that of high school graduates, who in turn had about twice the earnings of early high school drop-outs.

Grade failure is not only a handicapping experience for youngsters who are subjected to it, it also has undesirable effects for the school system. In the first place it questions the efficiency of the educational program. Furthermore, many pupils react to their frequent frustrations in the classroom by becoming rebellious, procrastinators, bored, and unable to relate to teachers (Fine, 1967, p. 13; Beasley, Goldberg, & Passow, 1966, p. 1). Thus, school failures become potential discipline problems,

interfering with the instruction in the classroom.

Finally, unsatisfactory scholastic performance limits the kind of contributions many of these youngsters will be able to make to society. In regard to their level of education and attitudes to work, they will be inadequately prepared for the job field and for responsible citizenship.

Non-attainment in school, therefore, is a serious problem. Greater effort should be made to acquire more knowledge about the factors leading to grade failure, with the goal of improving learning performance. Where grade failure is unavoidable, ways to deal with these pupils need to be found which are less crippling than our present practices.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

The schools in Edmonton, as in any other school system, have always had their share of grade failures. Wagner (1964), a superintendent of the Edmonton Public School Board, estimated that the group of slow learners comprised about one-third to two-fifths of all youngsters entering secondary education.

Until 1968 the only provision made for youngsters of high school age who were failing to achieve in the regular grades was a one-year pre-employment program. Wagner (1964) suggested that a "new approach must be taken"; that these children should have as good a chance for education at their level as their faster learning agemates. Better opportunities were made available in the fall of 1968 with the opening of the W. P. Wagner High School which was designed to serve "the vocational and occupational needs of slow-learning children" (Wagner, 1969).

In 1970 this writer was searching the cumulative files of the students who attended the W. P. Wagner High School. The pupils' recorded IQ test results indicated that the majority of these students did not fit

the criterion of slow learners as far as their measured IQ was concerned. Slow learners are generally defined as children whose IQs range from 75 to 80 or 90 (Laycock, 1963, p. 123). The records of two groups, those attending the school for the first time (Year I students) and those who were students in the school already in their final year (Year III students) were reviewed. A summary of the IQ scores of all students attending these two levels at W. P. Wagner High School in 1970 is provided in Table 1.

Considering only children whose IQ scores fall above the lower limit of the normal range (IQ 90), the number is 280. The proportion of pupils whose IQ had been established as 89 or less is 144 children. The ratio then, of students of normal learning ability to those who are intellectually handicapped (applying Laycock's definition of slow learners) is about two to one respectively.

The question that one is compelled to ask, having been confronted with this statistic is: since about two-thirds of the W. P. Wagner attenders were (at least in 1970) not grade failures due to sub-normal intelligence, what circumstances caused their poor school performance?

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO GRADE FAILURE

It has been suggested (Wall, et al., 1962) that unsatisfactory school performance might, besides low IQ, also be attributed to academic underachievement, low socio-economic status, as well as poor relationships with teachers and classmates.

Pupils are labeled underachievers if their academic performance is substantially below the level which could be expected of them on the basis of their IQ tests (Gowan, 1957). It appears that the majority of the W. P. Wagner students could be classified as underachievers, as they have at different times failed to attain the minimum scholastic requirement for a grade despite their tested normal intelligence.

TABLE 1

RECORDED IQ LEVELS OF YEAR I AND YEAR III STUDENTS OF THE
W. P. WAGNER SCHOOL IN 1970

IQ RANGE	YEAR I			YEAR III		
	N	%	CUMULATIVE %	N	%	CUMULATIVE %
& 79	20	7.0	100.0	7	5.1	100.0
80 - 84	21	7.3	93.0	14	10.2	94.9
85 - 89	50	17.5	85.7	32	23.4	84.7
90 - 94	65	22.5	68.2	24	17.5	61.3
95 - 99	75	26.2	45.7	27	19.7	43.8
100 - 104	31	10.8	19.5	21	15.3	24.1
105 - 109	15	5.2	8.7	9	6.6	8.8
110 +	10	3.5	3.5	3	2.2	2.2
TOTAL	287	100.0%		137	100.0%	

It has commonly been stated that school failures predominantly come from low socio-economic status homes (Deutsch, 1963; Dunn, 1968; Riessman, 1962). It is inferred that low socio-economic status background greatly predisposes youngsters to learning difficulty in the classroom. To what extent is this factor evident in the Wagner school population? Of the 280 subjects whose IQ was within the normal limits, 65 percent, or about two-thirds, come from low socio-economic status homes. Low socio-economic status, as used here, was established on the basis of the Canadian Occupational Scale (Blishen, 1958). The members of the low socio-economic group, the 65 percent, are children whose parents work in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs.

Another influence on learning performance (Wall, et al., 1962) is teacher and peer relationships. Teachers have always been held responsible to some degree for the educational accomplishments of their charges. Jackson (1965) asserted that "many teachers view scholastic success as an all-encompassing good and have a difficult time understanding people who do not share this value". If Jackson's assumptions are correct, grade failures would produce a different kind of student-teacher relationship than would academic success. Furthermore, as classroom climate is set mainly by teachers, the behaviour of teachers described by Jackson might be a factor in molding the attitudes of the achieving students to non-achievers. No doubt there are other factors shaping peer relationship. In any case, it appears rather important to investigate what quality of teacher and peer relationships the Wagner students experienced during their years in the general school system, and the effects, as perceived by them, that these relationships had on their school progress.

THE PRESENT STUDY

This study attempted to gather and analyse significant data from

the narrative accounts of children with normal intelligence who have been grade failures during their school career. It was hoped that the information gained regarding the circumstances which impeded the participants' school achievement would lead to the following benefits:

(a) It will provide explanations for the phenomenon of school failure of normal IQ children.

(b) It will promote a better understanding of factors contributing to poor learning performance.

(c) The findings of this study, if utilized, will aid in rectifying, or at least modifying, conditions which have been shown to precipitate the grade failure of children of average intelligence.

The data obtained consisted of the participants' answers to interview questions on:

(1) School history in regards to kinds of promotions received.

(2) Evaluation of subject matter difficulty in the various administrative settings they were assigned to.

(3) Relationship with teachers in the various administrative settings.

(4) Relationship with classmates in the various administrative settings.

(5) Encounter with the stigma of grade failure.

Some parts of the five topics of investigation require further explanations. Topic (1), types of promotions, for the purpose of this research, included any of the following administrative decisions resulting from grade failure:

(a) Repeating a grade.

(b) Social promotion, i.e., a procedure whereby a child is advanced to the next higher grade without requiring the acquisition of the specified minimum level of proficiency (Johnson, 1963, p. 19).

(c) Transfer to modified class, i.e., the homogeneous grouping of pupils at the junior high school level, whose academic achievement in one, or more than one, of the subjects reading, writing, or arithmetic, is 80 percent or less of the minimum requirement of his age group.

(d) Transfer to adaptation class, i.e., a class intended for students of normal intelligence who have functional deficiency of two or more years relative to their grade placement, in one, or more than one, of the academic subjects reading, writing, or arithmetic. (The adaptation class differed from the modified class in that (1) it had fewer pupils per class, and (2) it served children already in the second half of the elementary school grades).

(e) Transfer to the vocational high school, that is W. P. Wagner High School. Wagner served those students whose prior unsatisfactory academic achievement made it appear that they would be unable to cope with the requirements of the conventional high school.

The W. P. Wagner High School differed from other high schools in that it did not offer matriculation subject courses. To this extent it was considered a segregated school.

The students were offered basic vocational education for half their school time. Their academic instruction, the other half, was generally designed to complement their vocational fields.

Inquiry topics (2), (3), and (4) refer to various administrative settings. In Edmonton, the different educational programs the students under investigation might have attended were:

(1) In the elementary school years
  (i) regular grades one to six;
  (ii) adaptation classes, i.e., those described above under (d), starting the second school year.

(2) In the junior high school years
  (i) regular grades seven to nine;
  (ii) adaptation classes;
  (iii) modified classes, i.e., those described above under (c).

(3) In the senior high school years
  (i) regular high school classes, grades ten to twelve;
  (ii) W. P. Wagner High School, Year I to Year III, a vocational high school.

In the elementary grades, regular and adaptation classes, pupils are taught in the same building. Junior high schools also have children from regular grades, modified, and adaptation classes, under one roof. These programs were considered integrated, as they allowed for contact between the achievers and the less successful students.

The W. P. Wagner High School was intended to serve only academically slow students; therefore, it was considered a segregated educational setting.

The present research was undertaken in the W. P. Wagner High School, Edmonton. Gish (1969) described the school as an alternative in public education for older boys and girls who are unwilling or unable to meet the demands of the regular high school curriculum; a "second chance" school where students with past failure can start again with new hope.

The educational objectives of the three-year vocational high school program were:

(1) To improve the students' functional ability in reading, oral and written communication, computation, and to equip them for a successful start in the job field.

(2) To develop avocational interests and skills which will enrich their personal living.

(3) To develop realistic goals of achievement that give students a sense of initiative and direction.

(4) To develop personality traits and attitudes which will promote their success in the adult society.

Procedure

In the attempt to obtain answers to the previously stated five interview questions, 80 subjects were selected and assigned to eight

groups. The major variables for which control was thought necessary were sex, amount of time students had spent in the vocational high school, and socio-economic status. Intelligence, measured by IQ test, was also considered an important criterion; all participants chosen were in the normal IQ range.

Controlled Variables

Sex. Male and females were represented in equal numbers in the various experimental groups of this study. Therefore, 40 subjects were boys and 40 subjects were girls.

Amount of Time Spent in W. P. Wagner High School. Year I is the first year and Year III is the final year of the educational program of this vocational high school. It was assumed that the pupils of Year I, being newcomers, might view somewhat differently teacher and classmate relationships, subject matter difficulty, and stigma of grade failure, than youngsters who have almost completed their program in the special school; that is, have already spent years in the segregated setting.

Year II attenders were not included in this study, as it was reasoned that the emphasis of this investigation was mainly on failure experiences and their consequences, and much less on attitude change from year to year. It was also hypothesized that separate experimental groups of Year II students would not contribute sufficient additional information to warrant an increase of the sample population from 80 to 120 subjects.

Socio-Economic Status. The participants' socio-economic status was established on the basis of their parents' occupation and its rank on the Canadian Occupational Scale (Blishen, 1958).

The Blishen Scale organized all occupations into seven classes; examples of each class are:

Class 1 - lawyers, architects, physicians.

Class 2 - professors, chiropractors, teachers, nurses.

Class 3 - laboratory technicians, radio announcers, surveyers, stenographers.

Class 4 - bookkeepers, radio repairmen, office clerks, attendants to doctors and dentists.

Class 5 - firemen, welders, bus drivers, policemen, electricians.

Class 6 - bakers, barbers, carpenters, truck drivers.

Class 7 - janitors, labourers, cooks, waitresses.

For the purpose of this study welfare recipients and pensioners were included in Class 7.

The socio-economic status of the 280 previously mentioned Wagner students whose IQ was within the normal range is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF W. P. WAGNER STUDENTS OF "NORMAL" IQ IN YEAR I AND YEAR III IN 1970

YEAR OF ATTENDANCE	CANADIAN OCCUPATIONAL SCALE: CLASSES						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I	0	0	3	4	51	82	56
III	1	4	5	1	29	21	23
TOTAL	1	4	8	5	80	103	79

It seemed very obvious from the statistics presented in Table 2 that the children within the normal IQ range attending W. P. Wagner were predominantly from the lower socio-economic strata.

The research divided the subjects into two different socio-economic status categories. Because occupational Classes 1 to 4 accounted for only 18 percent of the 280 subjects, a division other than the traditional high socio-economic and low socio-economic division had to be made. Therefore, the following grouping was selected:

(a) other-than-low socio-economic status, which included classes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5; and

(b) low socio-economic status, which included Classes 6 and 7.

It is realized that a rather uneven partitioning had to be established, especially since Class 5 still contained some semi-skilled workers. Nonetheless, it was the only sectioning possible in view of the relatively small number of pupils in the vocational high school who had parents with occupations of "high" prestige rating.

Data Collection

The interview method was used for obtaining the relevant information. It was considered the best means of dealing with topics of such a personal nature. The subjects were interviewed in groups of five. Five open-ended questions were asked of each student. The questions were: What was your school progress? Compare your previous school with your present vocational school in the subjects you found difficult, the kinds of teachers you had, and how your classmates behaved toward you before and now. What are the opinions of your parents and friends about W. P. Wagner High School?

Analysis of Data

The data were content analysed. For this purpose the replies to each of the five inquiry topics were treated as separate sections. Each section was further divided into main categories. Each main category

contained several categories into which the subjects' responses were indexed. The results of the analysis were then subjected to descriptive analysis to determine whether or not the findings were significant.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

It is expected that the analysed information of the taped interviews will provide answers to the following questions:

(1) What are the prevalent patterns of grade failure of the Wagner students?

(2) What are the Wagner students' perception of the subject matter difficulty in regular school and at Wagner?

(3) How do educationally backward students in the regular classroom interpret their teachers' attitudes toward them?

(4) What is the students' perception of the pupil-teacher relationship in the W. P. Wagner High School?

(5) How do youngsters who failed perceive their relationship with peers who have adequate achievement records in the integrated classroom?

(6) How do parents of grade failures respond to their children's segregation from regular school to Wagner?

(7) Pupils from Wagner school have been confronted with a rather negative evaluation which one incurs who attends this type of school. How do Wagner students cope with the stigma of the low achiever in a segregated school?

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRESENT STUDY

The present study is assumed to be of significance for the following reasons:

(1) It attempted to provide the failure students' account of

their school experiences--as they perceived them.

(2) It attempted to furnish some insight into the psychological life of learning handicapped youngsters and give clues regarding more appropriate provisions for their emotional and intellectual needs.

(3) The information gained and utilized in practice might help to positively influence school policy for future potential failure students and thus enable them to achieve the educational objectives of the school and/or aid them to lead a less isolated and rejected existence in class.

LIMITATION OF STUDY

The school from which the sample population was drawn was the only one of its kind in Alberta, and although there are several in Eastern Canada, segregated vocational education for low-achieving students of high school age is rather the exception than the rule in Canada.

Random selection of qualifying subjects could not always be applied due to particular circumstances at the W. P. Wagner High School at that time. The conditions interfering were: absenteeism, vocational departments having tight time-tables would have been greatly inconvenienced by releasing some students, and a number of subjects from several vocational areas were on work experience and away half-days from the school. Changing interview time eliminated only some of these obstacles. These conditions reduced the possibility of completely randomizing the selection of subjects.

Nevertheless, due to the rather large sample, about one-fifth of the entire student population under investigation, the four criteria applied for qualifying participants, as well as the degree of randomness dictated by the daily affairs of the vocational high school, the reliability and the representative value of this research very probably were not affected.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present research investigated several aspects in the school career of pupils who have not been successful in the classroom. This review of the literature is concerned with these aspects, namely, types of potential failure student, the prevalence of each group, the integration versus segregation issue, poverty and its implication for school achievement, teacher and peer attitude to unsatisfactory learning performance, and the stigma associated with school failure.

FACTORS IMPLICATED IN SCHOOL FAILURE

There are various reasons for grade failure. A prolonged illness might be one. The present review does not deal with all the possible causes. It is confined to what has generally been considered the three main factors of inadequate school performance (Wall, et al., 1962), namely, borderline intelligence, social disadvantage and underachievement.

I. Dull Intelligence

While the present research did not deal with slow learners per se, the topic is relevant. The children placed at Wagner school were not all in the IQ range commonly cited as slow learners. Nevertheless, the students in this study who were scoring within the "normal" IQ range were in many ways functioning like slow learners.

Pupils who do not master grade requirement due to below average intellectual capacity are generally called "slow learners". Psychologists usually use IQ ranges to identify slow learners; eg., Abraham (1964, p.5) suggested the 70 to 89 IQ range, Burt (1955, p. 118) 70 to 85, Laycock (1963, p. 123) 75 to 80 or 90, Cleugh (1959, p. 6) 80 or less, Cruickshank

(1963, p. 4) 80 to 95, and Johnson (1963, p. 43) 75 to 90.

It is evident that the lower and upper cut-off for the IQ varies from 70 to 80 for the lower limit, and from 80 to 95 for the upper one.

What are the characteristics of these "slow learners"? Johnson (1963) reported the following pattern of school performance.

> The most obvious characteristic of the slow learners is their inability to "keep up" with the rest of the class in their rate of academic growth. For example, they learn to read approximately one year later than the majority of the children. Their rate of reading development is then about four-fifths to nine-tenths of a year during each succeeding school year. They start late and continue to fall farther and farther behind as they become older. What is true for reading is also true for other skill areas and the content areas as well (p. 9).

Cleugh's (1959, p. 6) observations were similar: The academic attainment of slow learners are "less than 80 percent of the normal for their age".

It would seem then, that mentally dull pupils are unable to satisfy regular grade standards and unless alternate provisions are made for them by the school, they will be doomed to failure.

II. Social Disadvantage

Social disadvantage refers to a socio-economic and intellectually unfavorable environment which is assumed to be detrimental for the healthy development of people who are forced to live in such circumstances. Vivid descriptions of their dismal poverty were given by Bowman (1970), Lee (1970), and Leighton (1970).

Miller (1968) identified four major variables in which the disadvantaged are deficient when compared with subjects from middle-class homes; they are:

a) Cognitive Deficit--Socially disadvantaged children were found to be deficient in language, both qualitatively and quantitatively,

and in abstract thinking.

b) Motivational Deficit--This is exhibited in a fairly low desire to achieve in school related tasks, and in lack of persistence. They expect immediate reward, and are unaccustomed to delaying gratification.

c) Personal Style Deficit--The socially disadvantaged usually have a low opinion of themselves. Their trust in adults is limited. They are impulsive in behavior and have a fatalistic outlook on life.

d) Physical Deficit--As a group the socially disadvantaged are smaller and clumsier. The incidence of chronic physical and mental health problems in this group is serious, as can be inferred from the Report of the Special Senate Committee: Poverty in Canada (1971, p. 123-132).

In Canada the socially disadvantaged are the poor who generally live in the inner city, the sparsely settled rural areas and several economically disadvantaged provinces. These people are even more disadvantaged if they are native Canadians, women, French Canadians, or poor immigrants (Adams, Cameron, Brian, & Penz, 1971). Children from these homes generally lack the skills and attitudes necessary for adequate functioning in school.

III. Underachievement

There are children who are neither mentally backward nor socially disadvantaged, yet progress in school achievement is considerably below what should be expected. Their poor learning performance has commonly been attributed to chronic underachievement.

The condition of underachievement is said to exist when pupils' scholastic achievement is substantially below their intellectual potential (Gowan, 1957).

According to numerous studies (eg., Flanagan, 1964; Ford, 1957; Miller, 1962) underachievers are about twice as prevalent among boys as

among girls. Their personal adjustment seems to be less mature than that of achievers, and they show poor attitudes and motivation in regards to academic activities (DeSena, 1964; Finger, & Schlesser, 1965). Socially, they engage in many activities which leave them less time for study but help them to overcome their feelings of inferiority produced by their low performance (Blishton, 1957; Kish, 1968).

Different methods have been used to identify underachievement. Charette (1968) and Diener (1960) worked with T-scores, Shaw and Brown (1957) worked with percentile ranks. Altus (1948) and Seaman (1960) defined underachievement for the purpose of their studies as school performance which was .5 standard deviation or more below what IQ ratings would predict. The most common measure applied appeared to be one standard deviation (Gowan, 1957; O'Shea, 1968; Braun, 1970).

PREVALENCE OF POTENTIAL SCHOOL FAILURES

I. Dull Intelligence

As can be predicted from the controversial IQ limits proposed for the slow learner classification, there was not complete agreement on the prevalence of these youngsters. Johnson (1963, p. 7) estimated 17 percent, Ingram (1960, p. 9) 15 to 18 percent, whereas Wall, et al. (1962, p. 4) gave a statistic of 12 to 15 percent.

II. Social Disadvantage

A rough estimate by Bloom, David, & Hess (1965, p. 4) stated that one-third of all high school entrants have socially disadvantaged background, and that the proportion is still greater in large cities. The same number was suggested by Riessman (1962), but he predicted that by 1970 one-half the pupils will come from socially deprived homes. A still higher figure was given by Deutsch (1963) who indicated that 40 to 70 percent of elementary pupils belong to this category. Dunn (1968), on the

other hand, looked at this group from the basis of school success; he judged that 60 to 80 percent of the educational failures come from low status homes.

III. Underachievement

Chabassol (1959), reviewing studies on underachievers, reported that considerable research was available on high IQ underachievers but not on underachievers of average mental ability. This trend still seems to be followed, therefore, only statistics of high IQ youngsters with relatively low learning performance can be cited. From a survey of 4,900 bright high school students (New York City Board of Education, 1959) it was concluded that 54 percent of boys and 33 percent of girls had obtained such low grades that acceptance into college was in doubt. Other investigators (Braun, 1970; Coleman, 1965; Matthews, 1956; Miller, 1962) established that from 20 to 50 percent of capable students received grades far below what was warranted by their intellectual potential. One might, therefore, justifiably make the assumption that a considerable number of youngsters obtain functional slow learner rank, not because they are of borderline intelligence, but rather because they fail to make sufficient effort to acquire school knowledge.

Conclusion

The review of the research indicated there is no uniformly accepted standard for the designation of intellectual slow learners, social disadvantage, or underachievement. The statistics regarding the prevalence of each of the three groups of potential school failures vary due to the above shortcoming.

PROVISION FOR FAILING PUPILS

The commonly practiced educational placement for pupils who do

not meet minimum achievement criteria have been investigated and grouped by Johnson (1963). The groups are as follows:

(1) Retention in a grade until academic proficiency at that grade level has been achieved.

(2) Placement in a special class.

(3) Regular class placement with social promotion.

(4) Homogeneous grouping according to achievement or ability level with some type of social promotion (p. 89).

In numbers (1) and (3), the child who has failed is retained in class with students of adequate academic performance. This practice is referred to as integration. In the provisions under numbers (2) and (4), the child who has been failing is removed from the regular classroom and placed together with other failing students. This practice of dealing with unsatisfactory progress is called segregation.

The majority of the present thesis population have been pupils of modified classes (that is segregated classes) during their junior high school years. At the time of this research all participants attended a special school, again a segregated arrangement. Furthermore, in their answers to the interview questions referring to academic subject difficulty, social interaction in school, and stigma, their experience in the integrated as well as in the segregated school facilities were described. For these reasons the research of the value of integrated-segregated administrative groupings has been reviewed.

The review of the research on the operation of special classes concentrated on which placement, segregation or integration, had been found to be of greater benefit to low achieving youngsters. The areas of concern were predominantly social and personal adjustment and/or learning performance.

Failing pupils, as a group, have been found to be less

emotionally mature and to exhibit more personality disorders than children with adequate scholastic records (Johnson, 1963, p. 50; Wall, et al., 1962, p. 10). Low achievers appear disinterested in school, bored or rebellious and are unable to relate well to teachers (Fine, 1967, p. 1).

Some studies on personality development of students in special classes demonstrated that segregation provided for superior social adjustment in the observed personality disorders (Johnson, 1950; Jordan, 1959). Similar findings were reported by Goldstein, Moss, & Jordan (1964); their research showed greater personal and social adjustment, both in school as well as outside of school, by learning handicapped youngsters in segregated classes as compared to such pupils attending regular classes. Other researchers reported that no significant difference was found in social growth as a result of the different groupings (Baller, 1936; Rubin, Senison, & Betwee, 1966; Thurstone, 1959).

It had been thought to be advantageous to learning handicapped children to teach them in a homogeneous group (Schonell, et al., 1962, p. 1), as this would allow a more effective approach. The research results on academic progress in special classes seldom bear out this assumption. Some studies provide evidence that segregated grouping promotes academic achievement in the segregated setting (Lust, 1966; Otto, 1959; West, 1961). Contrary reports, namely, that less progress in the basic subjects was made by special class students, have been published by Dunn (1968), Johnson (1962), and Thurstone (1959). Still other investigators (Ainsworth, 1959; Goldstein, et al., 1964) arrived at the conclusion that the scholastic progress was about the same for the segregated as for the integrated classes. Similar findings were obtained by Kaufman, Schaefer, Lewis, Stevens, and House (1967, p. 8-16) who had utilized the students' own assessments of their school programs. Although graduates of separate vocational schools had rated their

training higher than graduates of comprehensive schools, the training and job success of the first student group was very similar to that of the latter one.

In summary, it appears that available research cannot demonstrate convincingly that the segregated setting is superior, or even as valuable as the integrated setting, for positively influencing academic achievement.

Before leaving the integration-segregation issue, it should be mentioned that Quay (1963) proposed that in "evaluating the effectiveness of any educational procedure, teacher, school, and community variables must be considered" (p. 667). This seems a very sensible suggestion especially with regard to the teacher variable; it is interesting that the effect of the teacher's influence and attitudes in the segregation-integration question has not been controlled in some way. After all, in any classroom, "the most important factor is the good teacher" (Schonell et al., 1962, p. 3), or in West's phrase (1961), "the teacher is always the key to effective instruction".

TEACHER ATTITUDES TO GRADE FAILURES

Several studies have focused on teacher behavior which might have some bearing on the school achievement of students in the integrated as well as in the segregated classes.

The American Council of Education (1945) reported on some of the major deterents to learning and adjustment which "happen often enough in the school". It stated:

(1) Children are often required to learn things and are expected to behave in ways inappropriate to their level of development.

(2) Full acceptance and respect for each child as a person is not always maintained by the teacher,

> and relationships among children that imply acceptance of each other are not always fostered.
>
> (3) Reward and punishment are . . . often controlled by means of humiliation . . .

Criticized as unprofessional by Johnson (1963, p. 308) were teachers who used transfer to a special class as a threat, implying that such a placement should be something to be ashamed of.

West (1961), in his study on grouping, found that teachers favoured the triple track system but did not wish to be assigned to the slow stream. The rejection of the educationally backward was also indicated in a hypothesis by Lewis (1964) who argued that

> ...particularly classroom teachers (the carriers par excellence of public, middle-class culture) show more repugnance (eg., frown and scold more often) toward stupidity than toward anything else except dirtiness (p. 41).

The literature also provides much evidence on teacher expectation regarding the academic progress of low achieving pupils. The prevailing sentiment seems to be that children in special education are not sufficiently intellectually challenged. Johnson (1963, p. 310) warned that teachers who do not anticipate much growth of students tend to deliver unstimulating instruction which further retards the mental development of such youngsters. A stand against the supposed lowering of expectation was also taken by Young (1967, p. 10) who asserted that students usually "perform in a manner expected of them and, as a corollary, teachers tend to find in the children the behavior they expect to find". A similar argument was put forward by Rosenthal & Jacobson (1968, p. 174), namely, that teachers' expectations of their pupils' attitude and behavior could come to serve as a self-fulfilling prophesy.

Having diagnosed low teacher expectation as a factor apparently responsible for lower than expected achievement levels, why has nothing

been done to improve this situation? Perhaps, because the basis for educational backwardness was not primarily lower expectation by teachers, as these experts proposed. No doubt, other important factors contribute to underachievement. Referring to the previously mentioned studies on high IQ underachievers (Chabassol, 1959), teacher expectation had not been implicated as a contributing cause. Elashoff and Snow (1971) who reviewed the Rosenthal & Jacobson research Pygmalion in the classroom, which dealt with the effect of teacher expectation on learning outcome, severely questioned the data, validity and conclusion of that study.

To summarize, the literature on teacher behavior regarding learning handicapped pupils provided ample directions as to what might be harmful or beneficial to the learning process; yet, these statements were mainly based on opinions, as "very little research has been conducted on the attitudes of teachers" (Harring, Stern, & Cruickshank, 1958, p. 14).

PEER RELATIONSHIP

Youngsters in schools are not solely, or even primarily, concerned with acquiring knowledge and skills. Nelson (1964) proposed that children give their first attention to the way they are treated by the informal status hierarchy in the classroom. They are trying to assess what kind of behavior results in prestige by their classmates, and what kind of behavior incurs resentment and punishment.

Status in school, according to research done by Elliott, Voss, & Wendling (1966), is predominantly a factor of social class and grades. Therefore, low achievers seem to be subjected to isolation and rejection in the regular classes. Investigation by Baldwin (1958) and Johnson (1950) into the causes of ostracism indicated it was the unsuccessful youngsters nonconforming behavior to the standards set by the group and

the school which eventually led to their limited social contact with classmates.

Placing slow achievers into special classes should provide them with more and improved peer interaction and better chances for positive participation in classroom activities. These assumptions were examined and confirmed by Osterling (1962, p. 22) who demonstrated that pupils in special classes showed sufficiently greater satisfaction with school situations than corresponding youngsters in ordinary classes.

The result of research on peer relationship seems to indicate a relatively low social acceptance of the learning handicapped by their academically adequate agemates, and a healthier and less frustrating interaction with classmates in the segregated classes.

COMMUNITY RELATION

One might expect that the attitudes of the general school population toward pupils who fail are to a considerable extent also present in the community. Intellectual ability is not only valued by educational institutions, but also held in high esteem by society as a whole.

Tenny (1953) hypothesized that grade failures, like other handicapped persons, experience "social distance"; that is, they are treated as outsiders. Also, when dealt with in literature and art media, they are portrayed in a rather unfavorable way.

A similar finding was presented by Schonell et al. (1962, p. 8), who reported that school failures suffer vocational disadvantage beyond that involved in the nature of their handicap and employment is not easily procured.

The stigma of the grade failure seems to consist of being known as a "special class attender". How permanent is a label of this kind?

Sarason & Cladwin (1958), after reviewing studies in this area, reported:

> . . . many children who through their final year of schooling are still labeled "retarded" immediately thereafter merge into the "normal population" with at least sufficient completeness as to no longer be reported statistically. The compulsory school experience may therefore be viewed for many people as in effect the most difficult intellectual hurdle which will confront them throughout their entire lives, although later in other settings they may perform tasks of substantial complexity.

SUMMARY

The research reviewed within this chapter focused on the three main groups of potential school failure, namely, dull intelligence, social disadvantage and underachievement. It was concluded that due to different identification criteria applied, only gross approximation as to the prevalence of each category can be obtained, and that results on all aspects of the issues are inconclusive and controversial.

Reference was also made to the educational provisions for grade failures; these were grouped under segregated versus integrated placements. Here, too, the research is controversal and inconclusive. Although teacher attitudes and expectations, stigma attached to failure and segregation, attitudes of peer groups and the community, appear relevant to school failure, the researchers have not controlled these variables sufficiently to allow one to make generalized statements.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

The primary intent of this study was to obtain first-hand knowledge on how students who are grade failures perceive their school career in regards to their unsuccessful achievement, their treatment by teachers and agemates, and the attitude of the community to their educational backwardness.

This chapter describes the participants of the research: chronological age, family size, IQ, and occupation of parents. It further outlines the method by which data were collected and investigated.

THE POPULATION

A. Selection Procedure

The selection of students was carried out in two steps. The first step concentrated on establishing which pupils from Wagner met the following criteria:

(1) Three or more years of attendance in a school in Edmonton prior to their entering their present vocational school.

This requirement was necessary to assure that the subjects' cumulative school records were available covering at least three years in the integrated system. The participants' verbal accounts of their school progress was needed for comparison with the entries in their cumulative files. Furthermore, these documents, covering the minimum necessary period of time, contain intelligence test results on the subjects.

(2) IQ of 90 or above. As already mentioned, the IQ data from the cumulative cards were utilized. If a youngster had only one

intelligence rating in his file, that figure served for this study. The larger majority of students had more than one intelligence test result listed. In that case the IQ of each individual was calculated by adding the test results and computing the mean.

An account of the IQ levels of the sample population is presented in Table 6.

The second step in the selection of the participants consisted of grouping the pool of qualifying subjects according to:

(a) Sex; male and female were equally represented.

(b) Socio-economic status. The groups were Blishen Scale Classes 1 to 5; that is other-than-low socio-economic status, and Blishen Scale Classes 6 and 7, that is low socio-economic background, as explained in Chapter I.

(c) Years of attendance at Wagner. The subjects were enrolled in the Year I or the Year III Vocational Program.

Eighty subjects participated in this study; 40 from Year I and 40 from Year III. Each group of 40 included 20 boys, 10 from the socio-economic status Classes 1 to 5, and 10 from the socio-economic status Classes 6 and 7; and 20 girls, 10 from the socio-economic status Classes 1 to 5, and 10 from the socio-economic status Classes 6 and 7.

B. Characteristics of Subjects

The information on characteristics include data on age, number of siblings in the family, occupational status of parents, and IQ.

As stated, the data obtained from the individuals' cumulative records, except for IQ, were verified by the subjects following the interview.

(1) Chronological Age. The age distribution of the subjects of this study, broken down according to social class background and year

TABLE 3

AGE OF SUBJECTS, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, AND YEAR OF ATTENDANCE AT W. P. WAGNER HIGH SCHOOL

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE	YEAR AT WAGNER	MALES			FEMALES		
		N	CHRONOLOGICAL AGE		N	CHRONOLOGICAL AGE	
			MEAN	RANGE		MEAN	RANGE
Classes 1 to 5*	1	10	16.0	15.25 - 16.42	10	16.16	15.33 - 17.50
Classes 6 & 7**	1	10	16.33	15.67 - 17.33	10	16.25	15.83 - 16.75
Classes 1 to 5	3	10	18.05	17.16 - 19.83	10	18.42	17.42 - 18.92
Classes 6 & 7	3	10	18.16	17.50 - 19.33	10	18.92	17.10 - 19.33
TOTAL		40			40		

* Classes 1 to 5: Professionals (eg. architect) to semi-skilled workers (eg. bus driver).

** Classes 6 & 7: Semi-skilled (eg. painter) and unskilled workers (eg. labourer).

of attendance at Wagner, is shown in Table 3. Age is described in years and decimals of year. The chronological age calculated was the age of the subjects at the end of the school year in question. Inspection of the table indicates there is no difference between average age and range of ages of the pupils in Grade X and Grade XII of a regular high school and the age of the youngsters attending Year I and Year III of the W. P. Wagner High School.

Family Size Table 4 shows the number of children in the subjects' family.

There seems to be a closer relationship between size of family and possibility of a child having inadequate school performance for the low socio-economic status group than for the other-than-low group. The prevalence of boys who have not succeeded increases with the increase in members per family, being 0 for one child, 3 per two children, 4 per three children, and 13 per four or more children in the family. To a lesser degree this relationship is also present in the case of the girls in this social category; the prevalence in the same order is 1, 1, 5, and 13.

The Bureau of Census of the United States reported for 1968 the average number of children per family as 2.65. Using this official figure, and assuming family size in Canada to be similar to that of the United States, one can state that youngsters from families of three or more children are larger than average families, also that they are very heavily represented in this vocational high school. The total number of subjects who belong to families of three or more children is 60; 30 boys and 30 girls, that is three-fourths of the pupils under investigation.

The figures in column 'Four-or-more' children per family deserve special attention. Not only is the total number 41, which is by far the largest number of subjects under the various children per family headings,

TABLE 4

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN SUBJECTS' FAMILY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF PARENTS

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE	SEX	NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FAMILY							
		ONE		TWO		THREE		FOUR OR MORE	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Classes 1 to 5	M	0	0	7	35	5	25	8	40
	F	2	10	6	30	5	25	7	35
Classes 6 and 7	M	0	0	3	15	4	20	13	65
	F	1	5	1	5	5	25	13	65
TOTAL		3		17		19		41	

it also has the largest number of pupils in each of the four experimental groups, regardless of sex and socio-economic status.

According to the data shown in Table 4 it can be concluded that proportionately many more students who fail in school are members of large families. At the same time, however, it needs to be stressed that these proportions are only applicable to the Wagner High School in which this study was undertaken.

(3) Occupation of Parents. Table 5 gives an account of the socio-economic level of the participants' parents in terms of the Canadian Occupational Scale (Blishen, 1958).

The rationale for the rather uneven division into two socio-economic categories, namely (1) Blishen Scale Classes 1 to 5, or other-than-low socio-economic status, and (2) Blishen Scale Classes 6 and 7, or low socio-economic status, has been outlined under 'Controlled Variables'.

The listed socio-economic status refers mainly to fathers of subjects. In the case where both parents were gainfully employed and the mother had an occupation which was higher in rank, the pupil was grouped according to the mother's occupational level, as this might have had an influence on the youngster's attitude to school learning.

There were no participants whose parents were professional in the sense of Class I of the Blishen Scale. Seven girls and one boy had parents of Class 2 occupations, such as clergymen, nurses, pilots. This pattern is reversed for the occupational Classes 3 and 4, that is brokers, radio announcer, and stenographers in Class 3, and undertakers, photographers, bookkeepers as examples in Class 4. Six boys and no girls were grouped under Class 3, and four boys and one girl under Class 4. Starting with Class 5 there is a sharp increase in number per class. Class 5, skilled and semi-skilled workers, such as electricians, welders, firemen

TABLE 5

OCCUPATION OF PARENTS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ACCORDING TO SEX AND YEAR OF ATTENDANCE AT WAGNER

N	SEX	CANADIAN OCCUPATIONAL SCALE (SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS)						
		BLISHEN SCALE CLASSES						
		OTHER-THAN-LOW				LOW		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		PROFESSIONALS	PROFESSIONALS AND MANAGERIALS	MANAGERIALS AND SEMI-PROFESSIONALS	CLERICAL AND HIGHLY SKILLED TRADES	SKILLED AND SEMI-SKILLED TRADES	SEMI-SKILLED TRADES AND SERVICE WORK	SERVICE WORK AND UNSKILLED LABOUR
40	M	0	1	6	4	9	10	10
40	F	0	7	0	1	12	8	12
TOTAL		0	8	6	5	21	18	22

and policemen, contains 21 subjects, more than the previous Blishen Scale Classes 1 to 4 combined, thus making up the largest segment of the other-than-low socio-economic status group.

Ten boys and eight girls have parents who are members of Blishen Scale Class 6, that is have occupations like sales-clerks, truck drivers, barbers. Class 7, the lowest in the socio-economic hierarchy, with janitors, waitresses, farm and laundry workers as examples, contains the most subjects, namely 22, that is 10 boys and 12 girls.

(4) IQ. The IQ data were obtained from the subjects' cumulative records. Five students had only one IQ listed. For the remaining participants the mean of the individuals' various IQ test results was considered representative of his/her mental ability. Of the students whose records stated more than one IQ rating, 20 subjects had two IQ entries, 26 subjects had three, 17 subjects had four, and 10 subjects had five. No subject had a record of six IQ ratings, but one youngster had been tested seven times, and another eight times. The participants with low numbers of IQ tests usually had not attended school in Edmonton for all their elementary grades.

Taking the average of a student's various IQ measures instead of establishing an up-to-date rating appeared acceptable. It is a well known fact that youngsters who do not seem to profit from school show a progressive decline in mental capacity as measured by conventional IQ tests (Miller, 1968, p. 9). As this study was examining the experience of past school failure, the mean of available past IQ tests was considered a better reflection of the participants' ability to deal with school learning over the years than new test results would have been.

The data in Table 6 shows somewhat higher mean IQs for males than for females for the Wagner students. As underachievement has been

TABLE 6

IQ LEVELS OF THE GROUP OF W. P. WAGNER STUDENTS
PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE	SEX	IQ RANGE										MEAN IQ
		90 - 94		95 - 99		100 - 104		105 - 109		110 +		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Classes 1 to 5	M	3	3.75	5	6.25	8	10.0	3	3.75	1	1.25	100
	F	8	10.0	6	7.50	3	3.75	3	3.75	0	0	95.25
Classes 6 and 7	M	4	5.0	7	8.75	3	3.75	3	3.75	3	3.75	100.25
	F	7	8.75	6	7.50	5	6.25	2	2.50	0	0	96.5
TOTAL		22	27.5	24	30.0	19	23.75	11	13.75	4	5.0	

demonstrated to be twice as prevalent among boys than among girls (Flanagan, 1964; Ford, 1957; Miller, 1962) the present findings are not surprising.

Comparing the mean IQ of boys from other-than-low socio-economic homes with the mean IQ of boys from low socio-economic background, one finds them very similar: 100.0 and 100.25 respectively. The difference is a little larger between the two female groups: the other-than-low socio-economic girls had a mean IQ of 95.25 whereas the low socio-economic group had a mean IQ of 96.5

The total mean IQ of 98.0 of the participants of this study is close to the norm of 100 for the population as a whole.

COLLECTION OF DATA

The interview method was considered the most effective means of obtaining the information for the present study. As meeting the students individually for data gathering would have been excessively time-consuming, literature on group interviews was reviewed regarding the group's influence on the behavior of its members.

Trow (1960, p. 603) reported as disadvantages in group sessions that some participants might monopolize the discussion or antagonize fellow members; on the positive side the presence of other subjects frequently gives support to the respondent. A person's reaction to majority opinion was examined by Asch (1956) who observed that in most instances a different majority judgement was not enough to make an individual change his opinion. Festinger & Thibaut (1951) found that the more cohesive the group is the greater the pressure it will exert on its members to conform.

To what extent might the above stated forces have been operating among the participants of the present study during their group interview? Considering Trow's (1960) warning that monopolizing might occur, this possibility was prevented by arranging that each member was addressed by

name for his turn of the response. Antagonizing was also ruled out by the way the interview was structured which made the subject direct his reply to the interviewer. On the other hand, it appeared very likely that the presence of agemates who had also experienced grade failure was supportive to the respondent and made him more relaxed and communicative. The observations of group behavior by Asch (1956) were based on situations where group members were given a) the same visual experience, and b) where most subjects were instructed to persistently give false reports. No pre-arrangement of such kind was part of the present study. Therefore, influence by majority remarks seemed unlikely. Festinger, Thibaut (1951) stressed that degree of group pressure on the individual is dependent on group cohesiveness. As the members of each interview group were randomly put together, the amount of group pressure on the individual can be considered nil or negligible.

According to the consulted research it appeared that the kind of information obtained in small group interviews is similar to that obtained in dyadic sessions.

Originally interviews with groups of five subjects, each from the same subgroup were desired. This condition was only infrequently met due to the same restrictions prevailing as outlined under 'Limitation of Study'. Therefore, out of necessity, interview groups varied in number from two to six and were sometimes mixed in regards to participants' sex and socio-economic status. The only separation maintained was that of Year I from Year III students, as it was assumed that the former might be less at ease with students two years their senior in the Wagner program.

The interviews were conducted in a small conference room. The students and the researcher were seated around a table upon which the tape recorder had been placed. The purpose of the taping and the topics to be commented on by the subjects were read from a prepared sheet. It stated

the following:

"Teachers usually decide which pupils will pass to the next grade, who should be transferred into a modified program, who is disrupting the class, and so on.

Little is heard from you, the students, as to why you began to have a hard time with your school courses, or how teachers treated you after it seemed that you could not keep up with the work of the class.

These taped interviews are to find out what you students have to say about your school experience; for example, what helped you learn and what bothered you.

I will first tell you all the questions that will be put to you. But when the actual taping starts, I will ask only one question at a time which will be answered by you as I call you by name. When each of you has had your turn, I will give you the next question.

The things I want you to speak about are:

(1) When did you first notice that learning was hard for you in school? How was your school progress from then on?

(2) Compare your previous school with your present vocational school, Wagner, in:

(a) subjects you found difficult before and now,

(b) the kinds of teachers you had before and the kinds of teachers you have now,

(c) how your classmates behaved towards you before, and in this school.

(3) What are the opinions of:

(a) your parents,

(b) your friends who attend regular high school, about the W. P. Wagner High School?

Names of schools and teachers you might mention will be erased from the tapes. Your names, too, will not be used in any way.

Your willingness to give your views about your school experience

will be greatly appreciated, but you now have to decide for yourself whether you want to participate in this survey.

Before we start, are there any questions you have about the taping of the discussions?"

No questions were asked regarding the taping. However, some subjects inquired, "why did you pick us?" The answer given was that they were selected on the basis of their parents' occupation, as it is generally assumed that the more education or training parents have, the more they will be able to help their children with schoolwork.

After these preliminaries had been concluded the first question was stated and the interviewer addressed one of the students by name for the answer. After this person had finished recording, the interviewer called on the next one in a random way. After each member had made his contribution, a small part of the tape, about twenty feet, was played back. The intention of this procedure was to give the group greater confidence in their performance and to ascertain the proper functioning of the recording unit. Then the interviewer proceeded to the second question, changing the order in which the subjects were called upon to respond.

No time limit was set for the response of an individual. As a result of accepting whatever each student felt free to contribute, the answers varied in length from short sentence replies to rather detailed reports.

The time required for recording sessions varied from 60 to 150 minutes. The average interview was completed in about 90 minutes. The first 15 minutes of a session were usually spent in presenting the purpose of the study and each subject's part in it, and the giving of additional information.

SCORING

The subjects' taped reports were typed out to ensure accuracy and

greater ease in analysing the information gathered.

All the responses concerning past school progress, which were answers to the first question, were taken out in order that this unit could be processed separately for relevant data. The answers to the remaining questions were also sorted and filed according to the topic to which they belonged.

The method used for scoring and investigating the data was content analysis, which will be discussed in Chapter V. In applying content analysis, the first unit was scrutinized for sayings (content variables) which occurred with relative frequency and, therefore, could serve as indicators of what kinds of groupings of information should be attempted. Literature pertinent to the field of investigation was also consulted with the hope that it might aid in the establishing of preliminary categories.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The recordings of the interviews were subjected to content analysis. Content analysis is defined by George (1959) as:

> ... a statistical technique for obtaining descriptive data on content variables. Its value in this respect is that it offers the possibility of obtaining more precise, objective and reliable observations about the frequency with which given content characteristics occur... (p.8)

As a research tool content analysis has some shortcomings which were pointed out by George (1959): as a frequency count it leaves out the problem of meaning, and remarks with low frequency of occurrance may be either ignored or grouped together under broader categories. Other experts on content analysis (Saporta & Sebeok, 1959, p. 144) indicated different concerns, namely: categories are often arbitrarily established, units of sampling are based on expediency, and relationships between units are neglected. Pool (1959, p. 214) reported that scientists rate content analysis low as a research method because different analysts, doing the same thing, might come up with different categories.

Confidence in the method of content analysis was expressed at the conference at the Annenberg School of Communication (Gerbner, p. xii) where it was concluded that research in this field had burgeoned, producing significant theoretical and methodological advances. Berelson (1954) who is perhaps the most frequently quoted author in connection with content analysis has stressed its great utility in examining communication. Five of its seventeen applications listed by Berelson can also be identified in the content analysis of the present study; they are:

(1) describing the trends in the communication content,

(2) tracing the development of learners,

(3) disclosing differences among various groups,

(4) comparing different reactions on the same topic, and

(5) reflecting the attitudes and values of the population investigated.

Even greater applicability of content analysis was seen by Westbury (1968) who deduced from his research that

> ... the analyst has a wealth of potential data, more than can be realistically captured and analysed. The use that can be made of this mass of data...is only limited - for practical purposes - by the devices available for recording and the coding ingenuity of the observer... (p. 17)

For the present study content analysis, especially its above mentioned functions as proposed by Berelson (1954), appeared to be the most suitable means of processing the interview responses.

This chapter has been devoted to giving a step-by-step outline of the procedures applied in extracting the content variables from the participants' responses to the researcher's questions, focusing on the five major issues under investigation. The five main issues for analysis are:

(1) Data Concerning School History

Unit 1, answers to the question on school history, produced five major categories. The first two consisted of collections of statements concerned with a) school progress, and b) stated reasons for grade failure. The third one c) was concerned with the time lapse between perceived learning difficulty and the respective grade failure. The desirability of two more categories became evident after the subjects' cumulative files had been searched to verify the correctness of the participants' recollections. These main categories were d) more successful school progress than stated, and e) less successful school progress than stated.

(2) Data Concerning Academic Subjects

Unit 2 replies referred to the students' perceptions of their

degree of mastery of the academic subjects of English (which includes reading as well as oral and written expression) and mathematics. The responses were first grouped into the ones dealing with integrated school and into responses dealing with Wagner. Each group was further divided into English and mathematics sections. The resulting four main categories were a) English, and b) mathematics in the regular program; and c) English and d) mathematics at W. P. Wagner. Each of these subject matter groups was further broken down into two subsections. The first one listed the students' perceived difficulty with the academic subject; the second one dealt with the various reasons given for assessing the subject matter as easy, alright, or difficult.

English and mathematics were chosen because in our culture they appear to be more important in terms of viewing a child as a failure or success than other subjects taught. Furthermore, science could not be included as not all students had science instruction in their junior high school years, nor were all students required to take science in W. P. Wagner.

(3) Data Concerning Teachers

Unit 3 responses were concerned with the students' perceptions of teacher characteristics which they deemed to be qualities beneficial to them, or not beneficial to them, in regular school and at Wagner. The major categories established were: perceived positive teacher traits in a) integrated school, and b) Wagner; perceived negative teacher traits in c) integrated school, and d) Wagner.

(4) Data Concerning Peer Relationship

Unit 4 dealt with the students' perceptions of their acceptance by their classmates prior to their attendance at Wagner as well as at Wagner. The statements obtained were organized into the major categories:

positive relationship with peers in a) integrated school, and b) Wagner; and negative relationship with peers in c) integrated school, and d) Wagner.

(5) Data Concerning Outsiders' Opinions of Wagner Attenders

Reactions to the question regarding parents' and outsiders' opinions about the Wagner School, Unit 5, resulted in the following main categories: a) positive opinions of Wagner by students, parents, friends, and the general public, and b) reasons for positive opinions; c) negative opinions of Wagner attenders, and d) participants' explanations of negative opinions of Wagner attenders.

Each major unit contained several categories.

A detailed account of the units, their main categories, and categories as constructed as a result of content analysing the interview material, will now be provided.

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING SCHOOL HISTORY

The answers to the question, "When did you first notice that learning was hard for you in school? And how was your progress from then on?" were processed in the following manner:

Each grade from 1 to 9 was made a category. Further categories were established for recording the students' recollections of the administrative ratings of their school performance in each of their first nine years of school attendance.

At the beginning, failure had been one such category. Later it became apparent from the data that it was not only the bare fact of failure which needed to be registered, but rather the consequent placement in the educational system. Therefore, the various placements following

failure were made separate categories instead.

If pupils spoke of having had considerable learning difficulty but had managed to pass, they were also grouped in a special category.

Finally, the following categories emerged and were used to list the success of the subjects in each of the nine years spent in the general school system:

(1) Pass (sufficient work had been completed).

(2) Recommend (failure to master the work of the grade but pupil allowed to enter next higher grade).

(3) Repeat (failure to master the work of the grade. Student to remain in the failed grade for another year).

(4) Transfer to modified class (failure to master the work of the grade and student placed into a slower program).

(5) Transfer to adaptation class (failure to master the work of the grade; student to continue in an adaptation program).

(6) School work perceived as difficult but student passed the grade.

(7) Student returned to regular program from modified program.

(8) Transfer to Wagner High School following failure in a regular or modified class.

Another source for obtaining information regarding the subjects' school achievement was their cumulative cards. It was felt that they needed to be consulted for verifying the participants' oral accounts. Therefore, the record files were searched for the respective entries.

The same coding system, as far as applicable, was used for mapping out the officially reported school history of the pupils, as was applied for classifying their own recollection of their school progress.

The next procedure was concerned with identifying the number of occasions the officially recorded administrative placement coincided with the subjects' account of their school performance as well as instances where noncorrespondence became evident. In order to establish to what degree, if at all, and in what direction, variation occurred, a further

breakdown seemed desirable. The following method was used for this purpose:

Group 1 (To include students who related their school progress as less successful than it was shown to be according to their cumulative file.)

Their representations fit one of these patterns:

(1) One grade failed was incorrectly added.

(2) Modified grade was incorrectly stated when subject attended regular class.

(3) Return to regular class was not stated.

Group 2 (To include subjects who related their school progress as more successful than it was shown to be according to their cumulative file.)

Their representations fit one of these patterns:

(1) One more grade had been repeated than was reported.

(2) Two more recommendations to next higher grade after failure than reported.

(3) One more grade had been repeated and one more recommendation to next higher grade after failure than reported.

(4) One more grade had been repeated and two more recommendations to next higher grade after failure than reported.

(5) More repeats and recommendations than in (4), which were not reported.

(6) Two years of modified program were not reported.

Describing their school careers was only part of the pupils' response to the interviewer's first inquiry topic. Many added explanations which they assumed had contributed to, or caused, their low achievement. In order to process the different reasons given which allegedly had precipitated their academic failure, each subject's account was checked for comments of such nature. Thus, a list of perceived causes was established. From that list the circumstances blamed for failure were organized in the following categories:

Insufficient help received in school
Material presented was too difficult
Teacher(s) instructions were unclear
Subject put too little effort into school work
Subject had poor relationship with teacher(s)
Disliked school
Felt discouraged about his academic ability
Unable to cope with new mathematics
Poor relationship with classmates
Sight, hearing or speech defect
Illness
Absenteeism
Started school too young
School transfer
No reasons stated.

Actually, nineteen different categories of reasons were mentioned. 'Bereavement', which occurred only once, was grouped with 'illness'. Further reduction in categories was possible. 'Discouraged due to grade failure' and 'discouraged' for various other reasons were combined as they seemed very similar, even though each of the two were frequently mentioned. 'Corporal punishment' and 'poor relationship with teacher(s)' also were reduced to one group, since the former had only been listed three times as a factor. 'Did not do his work' and 'no effort' started out to be grouped separately. As they both denote insufficient performance, they were placed under the heading 'no effort'.

'Absenteeism' and 'illness' had been in one category, as both result in non-attendance. When it was found that each was mentioned frequently, two categories were formed, since the former is a voluntary non-attendance, whereas illness is not.

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING ACADEMIC SUBJECTS

Of the responses to the request, "Compare your previous schools with your present vocational high school in subjects you found difficult before and now", the statements referring to English and mathematics were separated. The comments for each academic field were further subdivided into references to the academic subject in the general system and

references concerning its instruction in the vocational high school.

About two-thirds of the participants of this study had been assigned to the modified program during some or all of their junior high school years. At first different major categories were established for level of difficulty in English and mathematics for students from regular classes than from the modified classes. When it was found that approximately the same proportions from each program had assessed these subjects as difficult (or as alright), separate grouping according to program was omitted.

English

Remarks dealing with the instruction of English were grouped according to degrees of difficulty expressed. Four categories seemed logical for the general school period, namely:

Very difficult
Difficult
Alright
Easy.

It was found that not one student had reported that English had appeared easy to him. 'Easy' as a category was therefore deleted.

A relatively large number of pupils further stated why they had performed in English as they had. These explanations were grouped and the following categories emerged:

Difficulty in reading
Difficulty in spelling
Difficulty in grammar
Difficulty in expression
Poor teacher-pupil relationship
English was boring.

Accounts of experience with English concerning its difficulty in the segregated school were recorded in three categories:

Difficult
Alright
Easy.

The reasons the students had given in support of their evaluation of their present English instruction were grouped under one of the following

headings, which were therefore made categories:

Too much work
Boring
Interesting
Disliked emphasis on written work
Liked regular class discussion.

Mathematics

The responses concerning mathematics in the general school in regard to its difficulty were ordered into the same preliminary three sections used for the analysis of English, namely:

Very difficult
Difficult
Alright.

Many students who had found mathematics a very arduous subject added information as to what they perceived had contributed to their inadequate achievement. The stated causes were organized under several headings. The categories retained were:

Insufficient help in class
Unable to understand mathematics
Dislike mathematics
New mathematics was too hard.

The students' evaluation of their comprehension of mathematics in the vocational school fit into the following three categories:

Difficult
Alright
Easy.

As before, reasons for their present performance were stated. These reasons were ordered into the following categories:

More help received
More interesting
Helpful for future trade
Better explained
Boring.

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING TEACHER TRAITS

The establishment of the categories in this section was determined by the frequency with which certain kinds of incidences or teacher traits,

which students considered relevant to the success or lack of success they had had in the school system, were mentioned.

The first step in analysing the section containing the responses to the request, "Compare your previous school to your present high school in the kind of teachers you had before and the teachers you have now", consisted of preparing two lists. One served for the collection of statements referring to teacher behavior perceived as beneficial, the other one was used to register remarks describing pupil-teacher relationships perceived as detrimental to learning.

The next step was the organization of the various remarks on each list under specific headings, each designating an assumed relevant teacher characteristic, thus setting up preliminary categories.

To decide on the relevancy of the tentatively established categories, studies dealing with teacher evaluation were consulted. Bryan's (1961) investigation, Reaction to teachers by students, parents and administrators, identified the following traits of a 'good' teacher:

> Fairness
> Friendliness
> Ability to explain
> Sympathetic understanding
> Ability to stimulate interest
> All-round teaching ability
> Sense of humor
> Enthusiasm for subject and teaching
> Emotional control
> Discipline (p. 12).

Beecher (1940), in The evaluation of teaching, background and concepts, named qualities which pupils had indicated as characteristic of their best teachers. In the order from the most to the least frequently listed in that survey, the qualities were:

> Knowledge of subject matter
> Character, force, disposition, sympathy
> Fairness
> Good nature, humor, kindness
> Discipline
> Ability to hold interest

Clearness
Willingness to help
Personality
Sociability
Patience
Appearance (p. 46).

These two lists of qualities of a 'good teacher' as judged by student responses by the above quoted authors were combined with the preliminary categories arrived at by sorting out the statements made by students in the present study. For instance, the trait 'emotional control' from the one list and the trait 'patience' from the other list were considered to refer to the same characteristic. As 'patience' was also a preliminary category in the present study, it was retained as a category label.

It also became apparent that some of the categories originally chosen were either unnecessary or seldom used; therefore they were either omitted or integrated into a closely related one. Such a category was 'classroom control', classroom control in the sense of maintaining a conducive working order and atmosphere. Cleugh (1959) and Johnson (1968) presumed that two of the various reasons for inadequate academic performance of potentially normal students were behavioral disorders and social maladjustment. Other research (Ellena, Stevenson, & Webb, 1961, p. 28) also stressed the importance of this factor. They concluded that poor maintenance of classroom order together with a lack of cooperation from the students had been found to be chiefly responsible for teacher ineffectiveness.

As the participants of this study were school failures for reasons other than low intelligence (pupils of IQ 89 or less had been excluded), one would expect that classroom control would figure rather prominently in the students' school background. But there were only four references to it. These were formulated in terms of strictness and permissiveness,

such as, "in the one class they were strict, in the other they let you do what you wanted". As classroom control had insufficient entries for a category, it was omitted.

'Help given outside school time' and its opposite, 'laziness', were also remarked on too infrequently to justify a separate grouping. In this case, the positive references were combined with the 'helpful' category and the negative ones with 'unwilling or unable to help'.

The qualities 'impartial', 'flexible', and 'gave praise, encouragement', were seldom referred to. However, their counterpart, 'unfair', 'inflexible', and 'made derogatory remarks', were mentioned numerous times, thus warranting the inclusion of the positive as well as the negative categories for these traits.

In this study the categories for ordering teacher behavior perceived as beneficial by their pupils were:

Friendly
Helpful
Motivated students to work
Impartial
Patient
Gave praise, encouragement
Ability to explain
Flexible, permissive
Helpful.

The categories used in this study containing teacher traits considered not beneficial by students were:

Unfriendly
Unconcerned
Deterrent to learning
Unfair
Lack of patience
Made discouraging, derogatory remarks
Little ability to explain
Inflexible, authoritarian
Unwilling or unable to help.

After selecting relevant trait groups the data were recorded in its proper place in the following four major categories:

(1) Perceived traits of teachers in integrated schools which students judged as having been beneficial to them.

(2) Perceived traits of teachers in integrated schools which students judged as not having been beneficial to them.

(3) Perceived traits of teachers in the Wagner School which students judged as having been beneficial to them.

(4) Perceived traits of teachers in the Wagner school which students judged as not having been beneficial to them.

In connection with teacher description, information was obtained which did not lend itself for grouping under the already established categories. Many pupils had spoken of class size as a contributing factor in teacher behavior. Corporal punishment was another case. It appeared inaccurate to lump corporal punishment with teacher traits, as it is handed out for happenings outside the classroom also (e.g. schoolyard, on the way to and from school) and is occasionally administered by someone other than the classroom teacher. Other statements not yet grouped were the ones referring to teachers being "not as good" in the previous schools as compared to the teachers at Wagner.

In order to give account of these three groups of data, 'class size', 'corporal punishment', and 'teachers in Wagner are better', were also made categories.

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING PEER RELATIONSHIP

The collected responses to the request, "Compare your previous school to Wagner in how your classmates behaved towards you", were examined in the following way:

The preliminary scrutiny of answers referring to integrated school suggested that the statements might be divided into two sections. The first one would receive expressions of experiences which were perceived

as unpleasant or discriminatory; the second one would be for remarks which indicated acceptance of the students by their peers despite low school performance.

The responses of a negative nature were further organized into the categories 'few friends', 'name calling', 'cliques', 'prejudice', 'not accepted', 'age-size difference', 'being bullied', 'fights', and 'felt dumb'.

Relationships assumed as being pleasant were arranged under the headings 'accepted', and 'no difference before and here'.

The reports regarding student-student behavior in Wagner were arranged into the groups 'felt freer', 'all are equals', 'accepted', and 'friendlier' on the positive side. On the negative side only one classification seemed necessary, namely 'not identifying with classmates'.

After the various responses had been ordered under the appropriate headings and the entries had been counted, it became apparent that some categories could be collapsed. The preliminary group 'prejudice' held only five entries, all referring to prejudice due to race. As prejudice prevents acceptance, the prejudice statements were combined with the larger category 'not accepted'. Another earlier grouping integrated into the 'not accepted' category was the one labeled 'cliques', which had seven entries, all stressing the non-accepting aspect.

Final categories used for the integrated school were:

Few friends
Name calling
Not accepted
Age-size difference
Being bullied
Fights
Felt dumb

which listed the negative experiences, and

Accepted
No difference before now.

which contained the positive statements.

For the segregated school reports the preliminary categories were retained as the final categories. They were:

Felt freer
All are equals
Accepted
Friendlier.

for the favourable remarks. On the opposite side the one category

Not identifying with classmates

sufficed.

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING STIGMA

The last section of the content analysis was concerned with the identifying of the various response groups to the question: "What are the opinions of your parents and your friends about the vocational high school you are attending?"

Obviously two large main categories resulted. The first one contained the parents' views of the segregated school and the subjects' explanations of the possible basis of their elders' approval or disapproval. The second one dealt with the assumed or experienced reputation the vocational high school had among persons other than parents of the participants of this study.

The categories which seemed to organize best the sentiments attributed to the subjects' parents in regards to the special school were:

Positive opinion
Visited school
For students with problems
For students desiring trade training
Offers more opportunity and/or freedom
Prevents school dropout.

Generally, it appeared that the opinions allegedly held by parents were in accordance with the views of the students themselves. The instances

where this did not seem to be the case were collected in the category:

Student - parents differ.

The youngsters' statements regarding friends' opinions of Wagner were arranged into categories which demonstrated the possible thinking of outsiders or the quality of their relationship to the students:

School is fairly unknown
Most friends are here
Friends wish to be here
Wagner is for the dumb
Name calling
Have positive opinions after visiting
Laugh about Wagner
Experienced discrimination.

Another group of categories was established to order the various ways in which the Wagner pupils had attempted to provide rationalizations and/or stated their reactions to the stigma associated with their special school status; they were:

Outsiders are misinformed
Heard only positive opinions
Try to change negative opinions
Negative treatment is in joke
Ignore negative opinions
Wagner is for cripples
Wagner is for lazy or slow students
Students are not bothered by stigma
Students are bothered by stigma
Not telling outsiders of Wagner attendance
Proud of Wagner.

CHAPTER V

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

In this chapter the quantitative analysis of the responses to the five open-ended interview questions are presented.

Unit 1 deals with school history. The subjects' administrative placement following grade failure is graphically depicted and so is the prevalence of grade failure from the first to the ninth school year. The stated reasons for poor academic achievement are shown and organized with respect to sex and socio-economic status of the participants.

Unit 2 describes the findings concerned with subject matter difficulty. Unit 3 reports on student-teacher relationship. Unit 4 presents the results obtained on peer interaction. In Units 2, 3, and 4 the responses are tabulated according to the four variables: integrated school, Wagner, sex, and socio-economic status.

The tables of Unit 5 summarize the data related to opinions held regarding the Wagner School and the students' stated reactions to derogatory remarks of community members concerning special school attenders.

SCHOOL HISTORY

Not obtaining passing marks in a grade could have resulted for the participants of this study in being assigned to:

(1) Repeating the grade failed.

(2) Social promotion which might be one of the following:

  (a) To next higher regular grade.

  (b) To next higher special class, namely

(i) modified class;

(ii) adaptation class;

(iii) transfer to W. P. Wagner High School.

(1) Grade at Which Subjects First Failed and Following Class Placement

Table 7 illustrates at which grade the subjects first failed to obtain minimum academic requirement as well as how the school system dealt with their grade failure.

Half of the students (40) had their first failure experience in the first four years of school. The smallest percentage of first grade failures are in grade eight and nine, namely 1.25 percent and 3.75 percent respectively; furthermore, these pupils were not retained in the unsuccessful grade but were passed on by social promotion.

More youngsters (42) whose school achievement had become unsatisfactory repeated the grade of their first failure than were assigned to the next higher grade by social promotion (23) in the elementary grades. This trend is reversed in the junior high school; after their first grade of non-attainment of academic requirement only four children were advised to repeat the grade whereas 11 youngsters obtained social promotion.

The rate of first grade failure is highest in grade three, namely 17.5 percent. This is followed by 16.25 percent non-attainment of passing marks in grade six, and 15.0 percent in grade five.

Table 7 also demonstrates that the Edmonton Public School System decides more frequently on repetition (57.5 percent) than social promotion (42.5 percent) when assigning class placement of pupils who have failed for the first time.

TABLE 7

GRADE AT WHICH SUBJECTS FIRST FAILED AND FOLLOWING CLASS PLACEMENT

FIRST FAILURE			CLASS PLACEMENT FOLLOWING GRADE FAILURE			
GRADE	N	%	REPETITION	%	SOCIAL PROMOTION	%
1	10	12.5	8	10.0	2	2.5
2	10	12.5	5	6.25	5	6.25
3	14	17.5	10	12.5	4	5.0
4	6	7.5	5	6.25	1	1.25
5	12	15.0	8	10.0	4	5.0
6	13	16.25	6	7.5	7	8.75
7	11	13.75	4	5.0	7	8.75
8	1	1.25	0	0.0	1	1.25
9	3	3.75	0	0.0	3	3.75
TOTAL	80	100.0	46	57.50	34	42.50

(2) Prevalence of Multiple Grade Failure

Figure 1 does not give information as to what grade the subjects were in when the second or more frequent failures were registered, or from what grade the students were transferred to Wagner. Rather these data are based on the common denominator that all subjects spent nine years in the integrated school.

There is a great variation in the number of times the subjects failed during their nine years in integrated school. The greatest difference exists between the two pupils who never succeeded in passing a grade and the three students who struggled successfully with the regular program until grade nine.

Eighty-one percent of the youngsters had experienced grade failure by the end of their sixth school year; 42.5 percent had failed two or more times.

By the end of their eighth school year the number of youngsters who had failed grades has risen to 77, that is 96.25 percent; of this group 35 percent had failed four or more times.

The end of the ninth school year, marked by non-attainment of all subjects, shows 6.25 percent of the subjects have failed eight times, 8.75 percent have failed seven times, another 8.75 percent have failed six times, and 6.25 percent have failed five times. The number of youngsters who have failed four or more times is 51 or 63.75 percent.

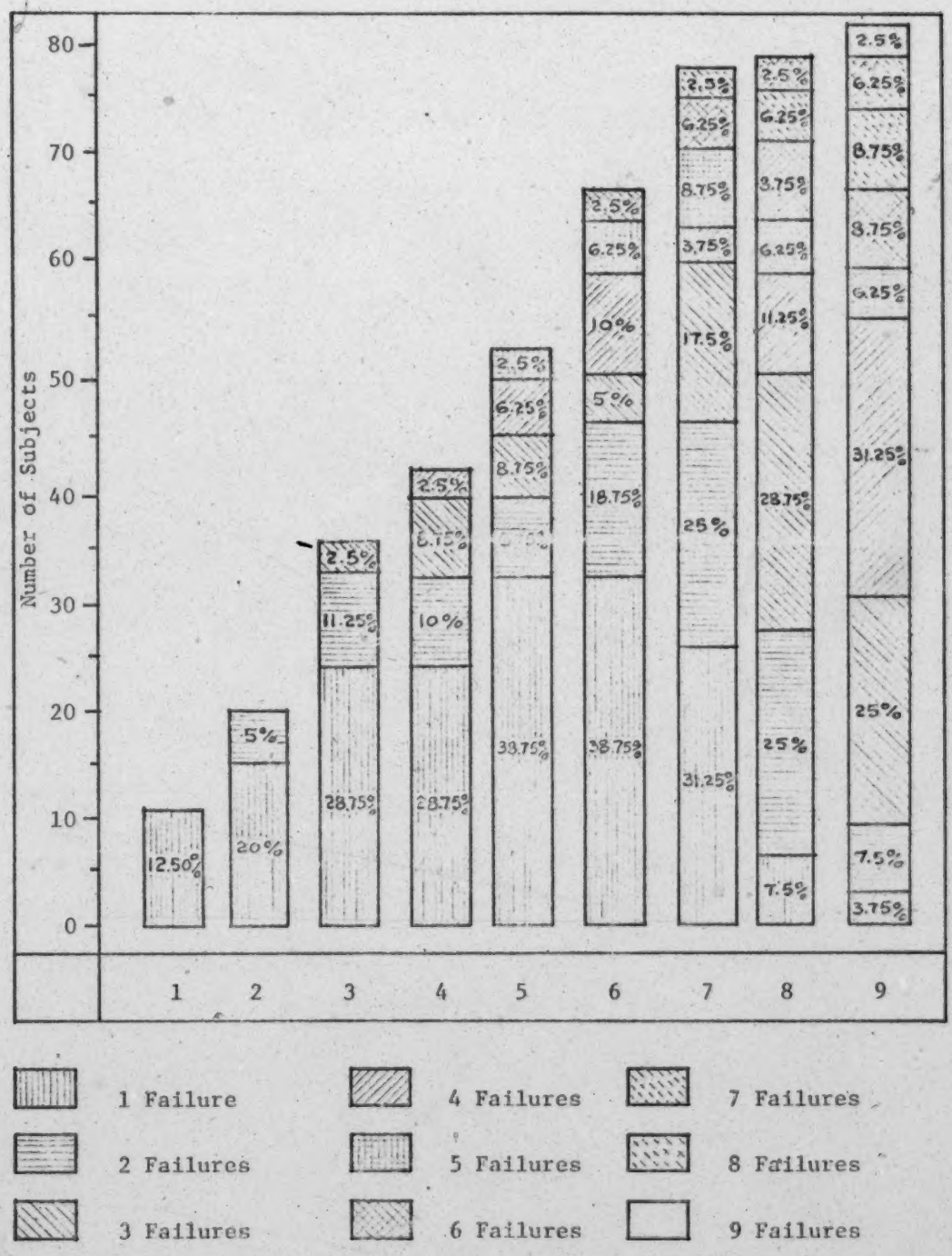
(3) Reported Learning Difficulty Prior to Year of Grade Failure

Although the question the students were asked was: "When did you first notice that learning was hard for you in school, and how was your progress from then on?" most youngsters (63 of the 80) responded by stating their first grade for which they had not received passing marks.

With the many incidences of failure one becomes inclined

FIGURE 1

PREVALENCE OF SUBJECTS' MULTIPLE GRADE FAILURES
FROM SCHOOL YEARS ONE TO NINE



to derogate the perceived academic difficulties, which did not have immediate failure consequences, to a secondary place of importance, or disregard them altogether. Still, there is no doubt that they deserve mentioning, not only because they were direct answers to the interview question which declared to be interested in perceived difficulties as well as failures, but also because at that time the impending failures might still have been preventable if the cause had been delineated and a suitable program instituted.

As only 17 students reported learning difficulty one or more years prior to grade failure, these data will be presented in a few paragraphs rather than in table form.

Eight of these 17 youngsters experienced a sense of academic inadequacy already in their first school year. Almost all of them, 16 subjects, met with learning hardship in the elementary grades. Only one youngster managed alright until the eighth grade.

Considering the fact that all 17 subjects eventually received non-attainment ratings, it seems of interest to establish what time lapse existed between when the child perceived himself as having learning difficulty and the grade he first failed.

Of the 17 subjects who mentioned perceived learning difficulty, nine, or more than half of them, failed due to unsatisfactory class work one year later. Six youngsters had two years of uncertainty and struggle before they were failed. Of the remaining two youngsters not yet accounted for, one accomplished passing marks for five more years, and the other subject for six years.

(4) Discrepancies between Stated and Actual School History

The question, "When did you first notice that learning was hard for you in school, and how was your progress from then on"? is of a

fairly general nature. For instance, it did not suggest that a detailed account was expected, or a grade-by-grade evaluation, after the first failure. Therefore, omissions, like not reporting the return to a regular class after a modified grade, or not mentioning the number of social promotions, could be attributed to the formulation of the request. Also, if only certain grades were referred to, no effort was made by the interviewer to encourage the subjects to fill in the gaps.

Furthermore, at the time the study was planned, it was not known too clearly what incidental information could be expected and in what way they would lend themselves to analysis.

The comparison, narrated versus actual school history, was not intended as a measure of reliability of students' statements. The kind of directions which elicited the replies would preclude this. However, since two sets of data were available and the comparison seemed to have merit and reflected the integrity of the subjects interviewed, the information, with the above qualifying remarks, have been included.

The number of pupils whose oral account of their school history showed a discrepancy with the records of the school was 15. Four subjects presented their school career as less successful than listed in the files. The errors were of the following kind: One grade failed was incorrectly added by two students. Modified grade was incorrectly stated when subjects attended regular class, applied to one pupil, and one pupil did not mention his return to regular from modified class.

The group whose school files showed more grade failures than stated by students contained 11 members. The errors consisted of: One more grade had been repeated than was reported; this was found in the case of two students. Three pupils did not list two additional recommendations to the next higher grade after failure. For two

participants one more grade had been repeated and one more recommendation to the next higher grade after failure was noted than had been reported. One student omitted one grade that was repeated and two recommendations to next higher grade, and another pupil had neglected to report even more frequent grade failure than the latter one. Lastly, two youngsters spoke of attendance in regular class whereas the records showed two years attendance in the modified program.

The proportion of subjects whose school files listed more grade failure than were mentioned in the interview consisted, as already stated, of 11, that is 13.75 percent. This seems a relatively small number in the light of the rather general nature of the question asked.

(5) Stated Reasons for Grade Failure

The students had not been asked "why" they did not succeed in school. Therefore, it seemed significant that 66 participants, or 82.5 percent also added the circumstances which in their opinion had led to their failing marks.

Table 8 presents the incidence of the various reasons according to sex and socio-economic class of subjects who contributed them.

It is apparent that the girls not only were somewhat more eager to provide explanations for their unsatisfactory school achievement (36 volunteered reasons as compared to 30 boys), but the girls also supplied a larger number of reasons, namely 72 reasons or 2.0 per female as against 51 or 1.7 reasons per male.

Each of the two female socio-economic groups provided 36 reasons for grade failure. The group least tempted to explain the whys of their scholastic non-attainment is the one of the low socio-economic boys. Only 14 of the 20 subjects attempted to give reasons, and their total number of reasons amounts to 22, or 1.58 per member.

TABLE 8

CAUSES OF GRADE FAILURE IN INTEGRATED SCHOOL AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE	SEX	CIRCUMSTANCES ATTRIBUTED TO GRADE FAILURE										
		SUBJECTS TOO HARD		UNFRIENDLY TREATMENT BY TEACHERS		STUDENTS DID NOT TRY HARD		MISSED TOO MUCH SCHOOL		POOR PEER RELATIONSHIP		NO REASONS GIVEN
		% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO	%
Classes 1 to 5	M	40	60	55	45	25	75	15	85	10	90	20
	F	55	45	40	60	25	75	40	60	20	80	10
Classes 6 and 7	M	35	65	15	85	40	60	40	60	0	100	30
	F	50	50	50	50	45	55	25	75	10	90	20

Forty percent of the other-than-low socio-economic females (Classes 1 to 5) attributed their poor school performance to poor attendance, whereas only 25 percent of the girls in socio-economic Classes 6 and 7 considered missing too much school as a cause; this compares to 15 and 20 percent of pupils respectively in the male groups.

Unsatisfactory peer relationship as a contributing factor was mentioned by 20 percent of the other-than-low socio-economic girls, while 10 percent of the females in the low socio-economic group stated this reason. The number of other-than-low socio-economic males in this category is also 10 percent, and no statement of this nature was made by the low socio-economic boys.

Teacher relationship as interfering with school learning was mentioned by 55 percent of the other-than-low socio-economic status boys; 15 percent of the low socio-economic status males referred to this problem.

(6) Grade Failure in Relation to Social and Personal Adjustment, and Curriculum Difficulty.

Another way of examining Table 8 is to arrange the stated reasons for grade failure into the three sections depicted in Table 9, namely, failure due to:

(a) Poor personal adjustment, which contains the categories 'too little effort' and 'missed too much school'.

(b) Poor social adjustment, which is made up of the categories 'unfriendly treatment by teachers' and 'poor relationship with peers'.

(c) 'Subjects too hard' or poor planning of the school system.

It is interesting to note that most frequently pupils blamed themselves for their low academic achievement; 47 subjects, 20 boys and 27 girls, made statements indicating poor personal adjustment. Next in frequency rated poor social adjustment; 16 boys and 24 girls, a total of 40, mentioned this as a problem. The least fault was found with the

TABLE 9

GRADE FAILURE IN RELATION TO SOCIAL AND PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT AND CURRICULUM DIFFICULTY

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE	SEX	POOR PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT		POOR SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT		CURRICULUM DIFFICULTY		NO REASONS GIVEN
		% MENTIONED		% MENTIONED		% MENTIONED		%
		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	
Classes 1 to 5	M	40	60	65	35	40	60	20
	F	65	35	60	40	55	45	10
Classes 6 and 7	M	60	40	15	85	35	65	30
	F	70	30	60	40	50	50	10

demands of the school, namely that subject matter instruction was too hard; 15 boys and 21 girls, a total of 36 students, remarked on this reason.

Tables 8 and 9 each summarize 123 reasons precipitating school failure. It needs to be pointed out again that 14 subjects abstained from volunteering explanations for their unsatisfactory school progress, whereas the contributions of the remaining 66 youngsters ranged from one to three per person.

SUBJECT MATTER DIFFICULTY

(1) Subject Matter Difficulty in Integrated School

As Table 10 exhibits, the proportion of pupils who found mathematics 'difficult' in integrated school is larger than the number who stated it was 'alright'. The trend is the same for the subject English.

Examining the English and mathematics 'difficult' columns one notices that the percentage of pupils who considered English hard is the same as the percentage who expressed that mathematics gave them trouble.

More females (80%) reported 'difficulty' with the subject English than did males (62.5%). The proportion of pupils who had trouble in mathematics is largest in the other-than-low socio-economic group of boys (80%); next in frequency rank the girls of the same socio-economic background; low socio-economic boys have the smallest incidence (60%) of remarks which indicated that they could not cope with this subject.

None of the students spoke of English or mathematics as having been 'easy'. The column 'easy', nonetheless, is included to facilitate comparison of perceived subject matter difficulty between integrated school, Table 10, and W. P. Wagner school, Table 11.

(2) Subject Matter Difficulty in W. P. Wagner School

The English and Mathematics instruction in Wagner School are to supplement the pupils' training in the vocational areas. In this respect

TABLE 10

PERCEIVED SUBJECT MATTER DIFFICULTY IN INTEGRATED SCHOOL

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE	SEX	ENGLISH			MATHEMATICS		
		% DIFFICULT	% ALRIGHT	% EASY	% DIFFICULT	% ALRIGHT	% EASY
Classes 1 to 5	M	65	35	0	80	20	0
	F	85	15	0	75	25	0
Classes 6 and 7	M	60	40	0	60	40	0
	F	75	25	0	70	30	0

TABLE 11

PERCEIVED SUBJECT MATTER DIFFICULTY IN W. P. WAGNER HIGH SCHOOL

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE	SEX	ENGLISH			MATHEMATICS		
		DIFFICULT %	ALRIGHT %	EASY %	DIFFICULT %	ALRIGHT %	EASY %
Classes 1 to 5	M	20	60	20	15	45	40
	F	15	80	5	40	45	25
Classes 6 and 7	M	5	85	10	35	45	20
	F	5	60	35	50	35	15

English and mathematics have a different content than that taught in the integrated school.

Table 11 shows that the demands of English in Wagner were judged as 'alright' by approximately three-fourths of the students; slightly more than one-tenth rated them as 'difficult' and less than one in six rated them as 'easy'. There was very little difference in the assessment of English as 'alright' between the male and female groups.

The ratio of pupils who stated that mathematics is 'alright' was somewhat larger than four in ten. More girls reported 'difficulty' in mathematics than did boys.

Considering socio-economic status and 'difficult' for the subject English, low socio-economic boys and girls are represented only in very small proportion (5% for each group) when compared to the boys and girls in the same columns who are members of the other-than-low socio-economic status group (20% and 15% respectively). On the other hand a larger percentage of low socio-economic males and females (35% and 50% respectively) rated mathematics as 'difficult' than is the case for the boys and girls in the other-than-low socio-economic segment (15% and 40% in the same order).

Comparing the 'difficult' column under English with that under mathematics it becomes evident that more pupils reported having trouble with mathematics than found English 'difficult' in Wagner.

TEACHER TRAITS

The students' communications on teacher traits are summarized in two tables. Table 12 deals with perceived teacher attitudes. For easier comparison data referring to teachers in integrated school are shown side by side with the same kind of information referring to teachers in Wagner.

Table 13 is organized in the same manner as Table 12 but presents perceived teaching style in the two school settings.

Attention is drawn to the fact that with regards to positive characteristics more remarks were obtained describing the Wagner teachers (152) than were volunteered for teachers in the previous schools (86); the ratio is approximately 1.75:1.

The opposite is the case when negative teacher behavior is considered. The incidences of students reporting unfavourable experiences with Wagner teachers is rather small; they only amount to 35, whereas 155 negative statements of teacher characteristics in the integrated school were made; the respective ratio here is 1:4.43.

(1) Perceived Teacher Attitudes

Table 12 gives an account of the proportion of pupils who remarked on their teachers as having one, or more than one, of the following characteristics: 'helpful', 'friendly', 'concerned', and 'patient'. Table 12 further depicts what percentage of youngsters perceived that their teachers lacked the above attributes, as well as the percentage of students who did not comment on these specific traits.

The most often referred to positive teacher behavior in integrated school is 'helpful'; but there are more accounts of 'helpful' teachers in Wagner School. The most frequent favourable teacher trait mentioned regarding Wagner teachers is 'friendly'; this characteristic is more than twice as frequently associated with Wagner teachers than with teachers in integrated school.

'Not concerned' is the category most frequently mentioned for undesirable teacher behavior in integrated school; it was referred to seven times as often as for Wagner teachers. The category with the highest entries of negative characteristics of Wagner teachers is 'unfriendly'; the proportion of perceived 'unfriendly' teacher treatment at Wagner is approximately half of the number of instances reported for such experiences in earlier schools.

TABLE 12

PERCEIVED TEACHER ATTITUDES IN INTEGRATED SCHOOL AND IN W. P. WAGNER HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOL PROGRAM	SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE CLASSES	SEX	HELPFUL			FRIENDLY			CONCERNED			PATIENT		
			% HELPFUL	% NOT HELPFUL	% NOT MENTIONED	% FRIENDLY	% NOT FRIENDLY	% NOT MENTIONED	% CONCERNED	% NOT CONCERNED	% NOT MENTIONED	% PATIENT	% NOT PATIENT	% NOT MENTIONED
INTEGRATED SCHOOL	1 to 5	M	45	35	20	20	35	45	20	35	45	5	10	85
		F	45	30	25	40	30	30	20	30	50	5	10	85
	6 and 7	M	35	25	40	15	20	65	5	5	90	10	25	65
		F	25	35	40	30	35	35	15	70	15	0	30	70
WAGNER SCHOOL	1 to 5	M	55	15	30	50	20	30	30	5	65	15	0	85
		F	45	0	55	65	15	20	40	10	50	15	10	75
	6 and 7	M	45	0	55	30	15	55	30	5	65	10	5	85
		F	35	0	65	75	15	10	50	0	50	35	5	60

In the integrated school more teachers were perceived as 'helpful' than as 'not helpful'; the ratio is approximately 6:5 respectively. For the remaining teacher traits listed, more undesirable instances of teacher attributes are provided than of desirable ones; the ratios are, for 'friendly' - 'not friendly' 7:8; for 'concerned' - 'not concerned' 3:7; and for 'patient' - 'not patient' 4:15 respectively.

For Wagner teacher traits the perceived positive ones outnumber the perceived negative ones in all cases. The ratios are, for 'helpful' - 'not helpful' 12:1; for 'friendly' - 'not friendly' 44:15; for 'concerned' - 'not concerned' 15:2; and for 'patient' - 'not patient' 15:4.

It can be observed that there are more responses from females (171) than from males (137). Considering socio-economic status, the most frequent statements were made by low socio-economic females (89), the least frequent ones by low-socio-economic males (56). The other-than-low socio-economic status females contributed 82 entries, the boys in the same social group 81.

Table 12 organized 308 responses concerned with positive and negative teacher characteristics which averages approximately 3.87 responses per student.

(2) Perceived Teaching Style

As Table 13 illustrates, Wagner teachers were described by students as exhibiting undesirable teaching qualities to a lesser extent than their colleagues in integrated school.

In regard to the skill 'motivating' pupils to learn, the same number of references is made for integrated as for Wagner teachers. When students remark on the opposite experience, namely teacher behavior that discouraged learning, or 'not motivating', the results are very different: there are 13.7 times as many 'non-motivating' teacher examples in integrated

TABLE 13

PERCEIVED TEACHING STYLE IN INTEGRATED SCHOOL
AND IN W. P. WAGNER HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOL PROGRAM	SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE CLASSES	SEX	MOTIVATING			CLARITY OF INSTRUCTION			FLEXIBILITY		
			% MOTIVATING	% NOT MOTIVATING	% NOT MENTIONED	% CLARITY	% UNCLEAR	% NOT MENTIONED	% FLEXIBILITY	% NOT FLEXIBLE	% NOT MENTIONED
INTEGRATED SCHOOL	1 to 5	M	10	70	20	10	15	75	10	25	65
		F	10	50	40	5	10	85	5	5	90
	6 and 7	M	15	35	50	15	15	70	0	5	95
		F	15	50	35	0	10	90	0	25	75
W.P. WAGNER SCHOOL	1 to 5	M	20	5	75	10	0	90	5	10	85
		F	5	0	95	5	10	85	5	0	95
	6 and 7	M	20	5	75	0	0	100	30	5	65
		F	5	5	90	10	10	80	20	5	75

school than in Wagner.

Teachers in integrated school were also mentioned 2.5 times more frequently on being 'unclear' in their instructions, and three times as many remarks were made on being 'inflexible' than were made for the teachers in the Wagner School.

If one looks at teacher attitudes, Table 12, and teaching style, Table 13, together, one realizes that students reflect more often on the first than on the latter. The number of responses referring to positive teacher attitudes as compared to the number of responses dealing with positive teaching style is in the ratio of 3.5:1 respectively for integrated school and 4.63:1 for Wagner. The ratio of negative teacher characteristics to negative teaching style in integrated school is 1.46:1 respectively, whereas for Wagner it is 2.18:1. The four stated ratios, teacher characteristics to teaching style, appear to indicate that if the student-teacher relationship is good, teaching skills are not much of an issue. On the other hand, when teachers exhibit 'negative' attitudes in the learning situation, students give increased attention to, or are more critical of, teaching style.

(3) Prevalence of 'Better' Teachers in Wagner School

The subjects had been asked to compare previous teachers to their present ones to establish the kind of student-teacher relationship experienced by the low-achieving students. As Table 12 and Table 13 already demonstrated, the pupils spoke of considerably more favourable qualities and experiences regarding the Wagner teachers than of teachers in regular classes.

Table 14 focuses only on the bare comparison of subjects' statements asserting that Wagner teachers were 'better' than their previous teachers, 'the same', or 'not as good' as teachers in integrated school.

TABLE 14

EXTENT OF STUDENT AGREEMENT REGARDING THE PREVALENCE OF 'BETTER' TEACHERS IN W. P. WAGNER SCHOOL

	SUBJECTS' STATED OPINION REGARDING TEACHER BEHAVIOR				
	'BETTER' TEACHERS IN INTEGRATED SCHOOL	NO DIFFERENCE IN TEACHER BEHAVIOR IN INTEGRATED SCHOOL AND WAGNER	'BETTER' TEACHERS IN WAGNER	NO OPINION GIVEN	TOTAL
N	2	5	52	21	80
PERCENT	2.5	6.25	65	26.25	100

The high degree of student consensus, 65 percent, on 'better' teachers in Wagner, makes it very obvious that it is the prevailing student opinion. A similar finding was reported in research by Jampolsky (1972), namely, "the teachers in Wagner are held in high esteem by their students" (p. 86).

PEER RELATIONSHIP

(1) Peer Relationship in Integrated School

The low achievers' interaction with their classmates in integrated school are summarized in Table 15. Slightly less than one-third stated they were 'accepted'; one might assume that they had a fairly average social life in integrated school in contrast to the remaining two-thirds of the students who felt they were 'not accepted' for one, or more than one, reason.

The most frequent explanation for the reported 'non-acceptance' by their peers was 'few friends'. 'Age-size difference', that is, not being part of the group due to being older and/or taller than most, ranked next in frequency. Other factors mentioned as contributing to the social isolation of the low achiever in the regular classroom, listed in order of decreasing frequency, were: 'fights', 'felt dumb', 'name calling' and 'being bullied'. There was little variation in the proportions of the subjects referring to the latter five stated reasons for non-acceptance.

Examining the socio-economic status groups one notices that the other-than-low categories referred more often to the 'age-size difference' as a factor in poor peer relationship than did low socio-economic youngsters.

More variance in the number of replies per column is evident

TABLE 15

KINDS OF PEER RELATIONSHIP IN INTEGRATED SCHOOL

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE	SEX	ACCEPTED		FEW FRIENDS		AGE - SIZE DIFFERENCE		FIGHTS		FELT DUMB		NAME CALLING		BEING BULLIED	
		% MENTIONED		% MENTIONED		% MENTIONED		% MENTIONED		% MENTIONED		% MENTIONED		% MENTIONED	
		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Classes 1 to 5	M	45	55	45	55	30	70	35	65	10	90	5	95	20	80
	F	20	80	80	20	25	75	5	95	15	85	20	80	10	90
Classes 6 and 7	M	50	50	50	50	5	95	25	75	5	95	5	95	20	80
	F	15	85	80	20	20	80	10	90	40	60	30	70	5	95

between the male and the female groups. More than twice as many boys as girls reported that they felt 'accepted' in the integrated school. Boys also provided more frequent entries in the columns 'being bullied', and 'fights'. The girls remarked more frequently in the categories 'few friends', 'name calling', 'felt dumb', and 'age-size difference'.

(2) Peer Relationship in Wagner

The peer interaction in Wagner which is described in Table 16 is strikingly different from the classmate relationship in the integrated school setting as shown in Table 15. Table 16 has only one column for unsatisfactory pupil communication, namely, 'not identifying with classmates' which lists three remarks. As this column heading indicates, these youngsters' isolation was of their own choosing. With the exception of the three loners the peer relationship in Wagner appeared to be of a thoroughly positive nature. The most outstanding quality was 'friendly', which was referred to by more than half of the students; next in importance ranks 'accepted', followed by the other explanations of the agreeable social climate 'all are equal' and 'freer'.

It should be noted that the youngsters who did 'not identify with classmates' consisted only of males; one of them was from the other-than-low socio-economic status group and two were from the low socio-economic group.

Five girls asserted that the school atmosphere in Wagner is 'freer'; only one boy remarked on this aspect.

PREVALENT OPINIONS REGARDING WAGNER ATTENDERS

The information presented in the following three tables are student responses to the question: "What are the opinions of your parents about Wagner, and what are your friends' opinions about Wagner"?

TABLE 16

KINDS OF PEER RELATIONSHIP IN W. P. WAGNER HIGH SCHOOL

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE	SEX	FRIENDLY		ACCEPTED		ALL ARE EQUAL		FREER		NOT IDENTIFYING WITH CLASSMATES	
		% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO
Classes 1 to 5	M	60	40	40	60	25	75	0	100	5	95
	F	80	20	50	50	30	70	10	90	0	100
Classes 6 and 7	M	45	55	70	30	15	85	5	95	10	90
	F	60	40	60	40	20	80	15	85	0	100

Although parents' opinions were requested, most subjects remarked only briefly on their parents' view in their answers and then continued by asserting that parents know Wagner mainly from the students' report at home, or parents regard the school the same way their youngsters do. This was usually followed by the subjects giving their own assessment of the Wagner School.

The question regarding friends' opinions of Wagner had to be changed to "the opinions of your friends who do not attend Wagner". Furthermore, in recalling some seemingly unpleasant encounters with agemates resulting from their attendance at Wagner, the participants sometimes added the opinions of adult outsiders who were not relatives. Therefore, the column 'friends' refers to friends and agemates outside Wagner, and the column 'other' refers to adults in the community who are not relatives.

(1) Content of Negative Experiences

Table 17 lists experiences which appeared to be demoralizing to Wagner students. These attitudes were reported to be expressed by relatively unavoidable social contacts.

Neither the students themselves nor their parents 'laugh about' the concept of the Wagner School as some friends or other outsiders do. Nor has discrimination among Wagner students or between parents and Wagner students and other siblings been mentioned. Furthermore, the stated reports of 'laugh about Wagner School' and 'experience discrimination' are rather rare occurrences.

The most often referred to unpleasant remark consists of having the Wagner School identified as 'school for the dumb'. Next in frequency is mentioned 'name calling'; all names signify mental subnormality. The column 'Wagner is for cripples, weirdos' contains expressions which

TABLE 17

CONTENT OF NEGATIVE OPINIONS REGARDING THE WAGNER ATTENDERS
AND TO WHOM THEY ARE ATTRIBUTED

OPINIONS ATTRIBUTED TO	SCHOOL IS FOR DUMB		NAME CALLING		WAGNER IS FOR CRIPPLES, WEIRDOS		LAUGH ABOUT WAGNER		EXPERIENCED DISCRIMINATION	
	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO
STUDENTS	3.75	96.25	5.0	95.0	7.5	92.5	0	100	0	100
PARENTS	5.0	95.0	2.5	97.5	1.25	98.75	0	100	0	100
FRIENDS	57.5	42.5	30.0	70.0	12.5	87.5	3.75	96.25	3.75	96.25
OTHERS	5.0	95.0	5.0	95.0	2.5	97.5	2.5	97.5	1.25	98.75

indicates that Wagner students are considered physically, mentally, or emotionally, inferior to regular school attenders.

By far the greatest number of rejection and humiliation is credited to peers outside the school. Unpleasant treatment reported from these agemates is 6.6 times more common than similar treatment attributed to older 'others' or fellow students. The group showing greatest acceptance of Wagner are 'parents' who provided the lowest incident of reported negative attitudes.

(2) Prevalence of Positive and Negative Opinions Regarding Wagner Attenders

Table 18 displays the number of positive and negative opinions reported in regard to Wagner attenders and the four groups of people who were said to hold these opinions. Attention is also given to the reporters' sex and socio-economic status.

The total number of persons who were credited with viewing Wagner in a positive way is greater than the total number of people holding opposing attitudes, namely 162 to 112 respectively. One can observe that positive remarks are predominantly expressed by students themselves or attributed to their parents. Considering only the students' positive views, 92.5 percent assessed their school as being a 'good' school for them, 5 percent mentioned dissatisfaction with the fact that they were placed at Wagner, and 2.5 percent did not volunteer any sentiment in this respect.

The proportion of positive statements regarding Wagner attributed to parents is almost as large as that of their offspring, namely 86.25 percent. The percentage of parents reported to consider Wagner of lesser quality than regular school is 13.75. The percentage of students reporting negative opinions of Wagner expressed by their friends is 78.75;

TABLE 18

PREVALENCE OF PERCEIVED POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE OPINIONS REGARDING WAGNER ATTENDERS AND TO WHOM THEY ARE ATTRIBUTED

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: BLISHEN SCALE	SEX	POSITIVE OPINIONS BY								NEGATIVE OPINIONS BY							
		STUDENTS		PARENTS		FRIENDS		OTHERS		STUDENTS		PARENTS		FRIENDS		OTHERS	
		% MENTIONED															
		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Classes 1 to 5	M	90	10	95	5	25	75	5	95	5	95	5	95	75	25	25	75
	F	100	0	95	5	25	75	0	100	0	100	5	95	75	25	35	65
Classes 6 and 7	M	90	10	95	5	10	90	10	90	10	90	5	95	85	15	40	60
	F	90	10	60	40	20	80	0	100	5	95	40	60	80	20	70	30

20 percent mentioned outside friends for positive remarks. Students credited 42.5 percent of 'others' as having uttered negative statements in connection with Wagner; only 3.75 of the students mentioned positive views from this group.

It seems noteworthy that more parents (8) of low socio-economic females considered Wagner a negative experience for their youngsters than did parents of the other three groups where only one parent in each group is reported to find Wagner not advantageous for low achievers.

Girls reported of no 'others' having remarked positively of their present school but many, 26.26 percent, gave instances of 'others' speaking in unfavourable terms about it. This contrasts to the boys of whom 3.75 percent reported positive, and 16.25 percent negative, opinions of Wagner given by 'others'.

(3). Rationalizations of, or Reactions to, Negative Opinions

An account of the various rationalizations and other reactions by students, or attributed to parents or friends, when confronted with negative attitudes to Wagner, is provided in Table 19. There is no group of 'others' in this table as subjects did not refer to 'others' in this connection.

Students contributed to all thirteen columns of responses, parents and friends to only six each. The response columns which display sentiments expressed by parents differ from the ones into which the remarks of friends could be grouped.

The columns in Table 19 are arranged to start with the column listing the most commonly reported responses to the column listing the least commonly reported one.

Columns containing only behavior practiced by students are

TABLE 19

RATIONALIZATION OF, OR REACTIONS TO, PERCEIVED NEGATIVE OPINIONS OF WAGNER ATTENDERS, AND TO WHOM THEY ARE ATTRIBUTED

RATIONALIZATION OF, OR REACTIONS TO, NEGATIVE OPINIONS	ATTRIBUTED TO					
	STUDENTS		PARENTS		FRIENDS	
	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO	% MENTIONED YES	NO
IGNORE NEGATIVE OPINIONS	36.25	63.75	0	100	0	100
TRY TO CHANGE NEGATIVE OPINIONS	27.5	72.5	0	100	0	100
WAGNER GIVES MUCH TRADE TRAINING	6.25	93.75	18.75	81.25	2.5	97.5
WAGNER SCHOOL IS FAIRLY UNKNOWN	20.0	80.0	0	100	6.25	93.75
OUTSIDERS ARE MISINFORMED	18.75	81.25	0	100	3.75	96.25
WAGNER OFFERS MORE OPPORTUNITIES	15.0	85.0	3.75	96.25	1.25	98.75
NEGATIVE REMARKS ARE JOKES ONLY	8.75	91.25	5.0	95.0	1.25	98.75
WAGNER IS FOR LAZY OR SLOW STUDENTS	10.0	90.0	3.75	96.25	0	100
WAGNER HAS BETTER TEACHERS	7.5	92.5	6.25	93.75	0	100
WAGNER IS FOR STUDENTS WITH PROBLEMS	10.0	90.0	2.5	97.5	0	100
DO NOT TELL OUT-SIDERS THEIR SCHOOL IS WAGNER	8.75	91.25	0	100	0	100
WAGNER PREVENTS DROPOUTS	8.75	91.25	0	100	0	100
HEARD ONLY POSITIVE REMARKS	3.75	96.25	0	100	1.25	98.75

'ignore negative remarks', 'try to change negative opinions', 'do not tell outsiders their school is Wagner', and 'Wagner prevents dropouts'. The proportion of students who stated they react this way is 36.25, 27.5, 8.75, and 8.75 percent respectively. The most frequently referred to categories, 'ignore negative opinions' and 'do not tell outsiders their school is Wagner', are passive responses to unpleasant treatment. In contrast to these are the positive and active reactions of 'try to change negative opinions', and 'Wagner prevents dropouts'.

The three columns which contain entries from all three groups, students, parents, and friends, are 'Wagner gives much trade training', 'Wagner offers more opportunities' (for low achievers), and 'negative remarks are jokes only'. The first two response columns point out real advantages of attendance at Wagner.

When faced with unpleasant views about Wagner, students and friends resort to responses like 'Wagner is fairly unknown' (26.25 percent), 'outsiders are misinformed' (22.5 percent). A few of them (5 percent) even go as far as asserting 'heard only positive remarks' about Wagner attenders, which seems contrary to the generally expressed experience.

The total number of encouraging reactions attributed to friends is 13, the lowest number of responses when compared to the parent group which is credited with 32. The students themselves contributed 145 responses, also the highest number of reactions in each column except one. It is obvious that students have many useful rationalizations and other ready reactions at their disposal which they apply to maintain in their own minds an acceptable status of the Wagner attender.

Although the results obtained by content-analysing the students' communication were not tested for statistical significance, they nonetheless indicate trends in education of the low achievers and reflect the attitudes and values not only of the low achievers themselves, but also that of their peers, teachers, parents, and the community.

RELIABILITY

To obtain an estimate of the rating reliability the following procedure was used:

Eight students (10 percent of the total sample) were selected at random. The interview responses of these subjects were compared with the typed transcripts by a second rater to check the accuracy of transcription. No transcription errors were found in these eight transcripts.

The second rater was then familiarized with the rating procedure by working through one of the transcripts not included among the eight selected above. The rater was then instructed to rate the eight randomly chosen transcripts in similar fashion, and to use her own judgement in cases of doubt.

The obtained response-frequencies were then ranked for each student and Spearman's Coefficient of Rank Correlation was calculated to obtain an estimate of inter-rater reliability. The coefficients for the eight randomly selected students ranged from .88 to .98, with a median of .95. This coefficients demonstrate high inter-rater reliability.

CHAPTER VI

QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DATA

The students' remarks presented in this chapter are intended to illustrate the kind of statements which led to the establishment of a category in the process of content-analysing the grade failures' replies to the five open-ended questions. Furthermore, examples of the grade failures' replies are necessary for a fuller appreciation of the school experience of low achieving youngsters. The tables depicting different aspects of the various findings are only bare skeletons of the collected and ordered information obtained. They give a very limited, impersonal reflection of the situation under investigation. These figures do not convey how the individual was affected by the experience and its consequences and how he subsequently attempted to cope with his degradation. Therefore, adding some of the pupils' remarks not only supplements the bare statistics but also present a valuable, new perspective.

The quoted phrases do not always consist solely of sentences or parts of sentences which directly fit a certain category. What preceded and/or followed particular assertions--even though at times belonging to a different category--was included if it explained the relevant situation or the student's sentiment.

SCHOOL HISTORY

The grades failed and the subsequent placement in the educational system are administrative facts and could have been obtained from the school records without confrontation of the pupils with the request to relate their school history. What was not available from the files was how the youngsters had reacted to the verdict of intellectual inadequacy assigned to them by the school; what rationalizations they applied to retain some hope and self-esteem and what attitudes had been developed

in the process. The youngsters' perceptions of what precipitated their school failure were considered an important part of this research.

Categories of Stated Causes of Grade Failure

Insufficient Help Received in School

...the smarter guys with the H's were teacher's pets. And when you are not as smart, you don't get as much attention. I did not get special help; they just put us on the side...

...they don't want to put up with the slow guys. They don't want to put up with them in the regular classes...

...I repeated grade 5. It was a grade 5 and 6 classroom. The teacher had little time to spend with anybody and I did not get that much better...

...the teacher did not pay enough attention to everybody and I got behind...

Material Presented Was Too Difficult

...I had lots of trouble understanding; I was really slow...

...the teacher only explained things once. Most of the kids got it except me and a few other guys...

...learning has always been hard for me...

...I repeated grade 3 and then everything was growing hard until I reached modified 7...

...I did not understand any work they did; not in a single subject...

...I did not catch up with my subjects until grade 8 which I repeated...

...when I was in the other school it was a lot harder and I got bored and did not pay attention...

Teacher's Instructions Were Unclear

...in grade 3 we had that teacher from England; I could not understand her too well. I was recommended to grade 4, failed and had to repeat it. Grade 3 really threw me off course...

...they did not explain anything in details. They explained it once and then you had to do it...

...the teacher in grade 5 did not show me how to do this and that. So I did not understand it...

Student Put Too Little Effort into School Work

...in modified 7 I got more help. But since I had a hard time in the other grades, I did not want to study. In the next grade the teacher was even better but I still had the same attitude. This changed when I came to this school...

...I did not do my work in grade 1. I worked for the first part of the year and then slowed down, and slowed down, and slowed down. The main reason I did poorly is I just did not feel like working most of the time...

...I figured I could not do it. I got lower marks when I studied. So I gave up studying...

...I thought: "what is the use of learning? I am dumb". I was always in the B-Group. I felt I was the dumbest, so I was...

...I had to repeat grade 6 and my marks were dropping. The same teacher! The same subject stuff! I thought it was a drag and did not work...

Students Had Poor Relationship with Teacher(s)

...I did not pay attention and they did not care about me very much. When I did not do my homework I got the strap...

...I had problems with teachers. The grade 1 teacher babied us around. The grade 2 teacher was rough. She hit us over the head with the ruler and called us down. I flunked. The teachers from 1 to 3 insulted me frequently. I was kind of fat when I was a little guy. And when they did not like things I did they came up with a certain word. A few times when they said it I walked out of class and told my parents about it. They straightened them out. And then the teachers really hated me...

...because of a nasty teacher I sluffed off school in grade 5. I figured that this would hurt him. But I hurt myself...

...the grade 1 teacher was mean, pulling my ears, my hair. She used to say "gee, you are dumb". I could do things but I did not think she liked me. This bad start followed me all the way through...

...I never got along with teachers. I have changed a lot; I used to be terrible...

...that teacher called me "dumb-dumb" because I was not very smart. It accidently slipped out. He had asked me something and I knew it but was afraid of

saying it. I was kind of shy. Soon everyone in class and then in school was calling me "dumb-dumb". The health teacher called me "Dorass" (my name is Doris); they still call me "Dorass". In grade 8 I barely passed. And I did not get along with the teacher. He used to hit me over the head with the ruler and suspended me for talking. I knew the hallways better than the classroom. I was scared to ask questions in math; he would say, "why do you want to know? You would not be able to learn anyway"...

Disliked School

...I just was not interested in school. I did not like it...

...I really got kind of a bad start. I did not particularly want to go to school in grade 1...

...I could have passed but I made the choice to fail in grade 6. In grade 8 I was right at the edge, skipped much and wanted to be kicked out. Wanted to get out of school mainly because of the people I was hanging around with. One had been booted out and was really making cash up north. He had a chance for me to go up too. But then I found out that I could not quit until I was 16...

Felt Discouraged About His/Her Academic Ability

...I flunked grade 1. After that I slackened off completely with school. It knocked my morale down. I did not think I had the brain to do it. I felt self-conscious about it...

...in grade 3 they failed me. From then on I hated the world...I would not do anything for anybody. Most of the time I was in trouble...

...I failed grade 2 and did not want to work after that. I started to work again in grade 6, but by then it did not help anymore, by then I was in a modified class...

...when we got the tests back we had to say our marks out loud and everybody laughed at me. Then I did not care about school because I got queered out all the time. I got laughed at not once but all the time...

Unable to Cope with New Mathematics

...my difficulty started in grade 7 when the new math came in. I did not understand it and was put into modified 8...

...I had repeated grade 2 and went down from then on, especially when the new math came in I was at the bottom of the class...

Poor Relationship with Classmates

...in the new school I got hassled from everybody and then I did not care too much about learning and failed...

...I usually did not get along with anybody, was beating up other kids...

...I hated school! All the people I once went to class with were ahead of me. I could not stand it...

Illness

...in grade 3 I was away a lot because of illness and then I did not catch up and had to repeat...

...I repeated grade 2. I had a good teacher there but I was sick most of the year...

...I repeated grade 1. I was in hospital having tests because of my epilepsy which was hard to control then. And I also had pneumonia...

Absenteeism

...I missed a lot of school in the elementary grades, babysitting at home. Then I did not know how to do things and had a hard time...

...I had much fun skipping in grade 8, seeing my friends and going downtown...

...in junior high it was mostly, "let's skip and get out"...

...grade 9 was hard. I did not like it and skipped...

Started School Too Young

...I was 5 years old when I started school. I was kind of pushed into it. My kindergarten teacher thought I was kind of smart. He popped me right into grade 1. I did not want to go to school. I wanted to play around. The rest of my friends were not in school. The kids in the class were older than I was...

...I repeated grade 2; I was too young for grade 3...

School Transfer

...for grade 3 I transferred to another school; I failed. Then I moved again and took the grade over...

...in grade 5 we moved and I got transferred to a new school. I could not cope with the new school, and the new kids, and the new teacher...

...I started school late, staying longer in kindergarten.
And every year I went to a different school...

IQ Information with Pupils Statements and Complete Replies

Selected phrases become more convincing if the respective subject's mental ability is stated concurrently. For instance, credibility is added to the assertion, "I could have passed but I made the choice to fail in grade 6" (see Category: 'disliked school', quotation 3) if the individual's IQ ratings, namely 108 to 128, is known. Another example is the student who declared, "the grade 1 teacher was mean, pulling my ears, my hair. She used to say, "gee, you are dumb". I could do the things but I did not think she liked me. This bad start followed me all the way through school..." (Category: 'poor relationship with teacher(s)', quotation 4). The tested IQ results in this case were 91 to 122.

The depressing effect that school failure has on the pupils who have experienced it has already been illustrated in the fragments of the statements on school history. But they do not catch and reflect the personality of the particular individual to the extent that complete replies can. Complete reactions provide the reader with better insight into the psychology of the low achieving student, therefore, three full answers to the question on school progress have been included.

The effect that failure has on pupils varies. Some youngsters may work harder to overcome their learning deficiencies, but obviously, this was not the case with the subjects of the thesis population. Nonetheless, the participants manifested some rather typical (if one can loosely group them into types) reactions of students with normal mental ability whose unsatisfactory performance in the general system resulted in their transfer to vocational education. Three complete replies to the question on school progress, each presenting a special type, have been selected and are presented now, as well as each speaker's IQ

ratings.

Reply 1 portrays the youngsters who know they are not intellectually slow and feel they do not belong in special classes.

This particular participant's statement was chosen because he gave more information than the average subject and was openly resentful of the perceived indignity of being marked a failure.

This pupil's IQ ratings varied from 95 to 119.

> Grade 1 and 2 were pretty easy, even though I was hard of hearing which got corrected.
>
> In grade 3 we had a teacher from England; I could not understand her too well. I was recommended to grade 4, failed and had to repeat it. I sort of gave up after failing grade 4. I had tried to do my best but grade 3 really threw me off course.
>
> Grade 5 and 6 were easy and then I was put into the modified program. I did not like that.
>
> Grade 7 and 8 were not too bad. I did my work but also fooled around. Then I was put into pre-employment class; this shot me right down.
>
> I know I am smarter than I make out, but I gave up. If I wanted to work I could have been anywhere right now but I gave up because of the class I was in. I was always working with somebody slower than me. If there would have been somebody smarter than me--but they all were slow. It was hard for me to set the pace.
>
> My brother went the same way I did.
>
> All my friends were ahead of me. The guys in the class were younger than me. I just did not click with them.
>
> I was not the top student in the modified classes, but there were a lot below me. If there would have been somebody up there with me at my level, I would have done a lot better, would have tried to keep up with him. But all the other guys were pulling me down.
>
> I was in a mixed grade 5 and 6 class. I was listening to the guys in the higher grade, and they were talking about something neat. And I wanted to go and listen to them, because they were where I should have been. Yet I was back one grade lower! And I was not doing my work. I got screwed up like this all through the years.
>
> Everyone is equal. But then they start programs like modified, reading classes, H, A, B, and C groups. I was in an A group. And right there you are beat. You talk to

someone in the H group--these guys are proud as can be. When you are told you are in the A group you have no pride left. Your ego is shot!

I don't like being low. Ever since this program started I tried fighting my way out of it, but it is a losing battle. When one is in the modified program, one has to be smarter than the ones in the regular program to make the way out again. So I sort of gave up. If they make me low, I might as well be low. Why work?

My parents tried to help me out with this new math. They did not know how to do it; they tried, though. They pushed it down me, "do it", so I did it. Not to learn but for the sake of the establishment. Not for myself but to get through with it.

Reply 2 typifies the group of children who want to learn but do not know how to go about it.

This subject expressed repeatedly that the teachers were unable to develop her intellect. The school pushed her along without providing her with the necessary prerequisites to cope with the work and to profit from it. Confusion turned to frustration, to hate, and finally to behavior problems.

Her IQ ratings varied from 96 to 117.

In grade 1 I was foggy. My IQ was high, that is why they put me into school early. I hated school. I did not want to go.

They should not have put me into grade 1. They should have waited a year. I did not know my address or phone number. I was just too young; not ready to go to school.

They catered to the smart kids. At least this was the way I found it to be.

I was out most of the year, nervous stomach.

They passed me to grade 2, then 3. I got glasses in grade 3. I did not know any of the work. The teacher was new and did not want to fail anyone, so I went to grade 4. I did not know a thing.

Grade 5 I failed and was put into a combined grade 5 and 6. Here again I did not have the faintest idea.

In regular grade 7 I hated school. I would not write my tests, would not do anything.

I was in regular grade 8 and 9.

I did not really repeat a grade.

They should have kept me back in grade 1 until I knew things. If you don't know things, you don't want to do them.

Reply 3 represents the segment of students who have dropped out "in mind" early in their school career. Their performance in school seems fairly irrelevant to their emotional well-being.

Whereas the reply 1 and reply 2 subjects were bitter about their inability to compete in the regular system, the third speaker did not seem to be bothered by such an experience. This pupil went to school to meet friends. As far as learning and succeeding were concerned, if there ever had been ambitions in this area, they had been given up long, long ago.

This person's IQ rating fluctuated from 86 to 93.

I cannot remember when my difficulties started; it was a long time ago. I really don't concentrate on school. I don't like it.

School was o.k. in grade 1, and I remember grade 6.

I failed grade 7 and repeated it and I was really getting stupid. So they asked me whether I wanted to go to Wagner. My other choice would have been modified 8.

I don't really like school. I don't concentrate on it. But this year here I enjoyed school.

There are more 'types' of reactions to failure than the three briefly sketched ones; and some do not fit into a definite pattern. It is hoped the ones introduced here will serve as an illustration of the different effects school failure can have on the personality of the children subjected to it.

ACADEMIC SUBJECTS

English

The academic subject English, as applied in the school system in

which this study was conducted, is a collective term for the instruction of reading, spelling, grammar, written expression, and appreciation of literature. Most of the students in the sample reported that they had been weak in at least one of these areas, others stated that they had problems in all.

The examples not only illustrate how the pupils rated the level of their skill in the various components of English, but also state to what they attributed their degree of success and the extent of their interest in this subject.

The statements presented first refer to the students' perceptions of English in regular school; they are followed by statements referring to English in the W. P. Wagner Vocational High School.

Level of Skill in English in the General School System

Difficulty in Reading

...in grade 1 and 2 I had a reading book with pictures in it and the story. But in grade 3 they took the pictures away and I was lost. I have also trouble pronouncing the long, big words...

...reading was hard because we always used different books and I never had a chance to get anything out of them...

...reading really was not too bad for me. But I never liked reading aloud, I felt self-conscious, felt the whole class was looking at me...

...I had quite a bit of trouble in reading. I just never caught on to it. If I had to read to myself I pretended to pick up some points, so if the teacher ever asked me questions I might answer one. I used to fool myself more than anyone...

...I never liked reading, and I don't think I ever will...

...from grade 1 to 6 I was a dummy. I could not read. And the teachers were yelling, making me stay after school because I could not do my work...

Spelling

...I did not like it because I could not spell...

...spelling was horrible from the start. When we had to break

words up into little syllables I did not understand what they wanted us to do. So I lost contact ever since...

Grammar

...we did not get too much grammar. No one had that kind of vocabulary...

...they wanted us to learn that grammar. I never understood it and I could not find in the sentences what we were supposed to find...

...I could not stand English. These verbs, nouns, and so on--I started to catch on in the last part of grade 8, but by then I figured I did not like the rest of the school, so that could go too...

...just about everything we did in English in the other school I did not like; it was lousy. I could read and write half decently but the rest of the stuff, like pronouns, they pounded into my head and it kept falling out...

...I did not understand--what is it called? Grammar? I hated it. I did not go that much to English. Then they kicked me out and I was glad...

Writing

...I did not mind learning about poems and literature. But when they started to tell us to write down what we felt about a particular phrase, I just could not find the words to put it down on paper...

...even here I cannot handle the writing too well yet...

...before, I did not have trouble with reading, it was with writing. You had to decide on your essays, make up the words. This is what I could not get, and the punctuations...

English Was Boring

...till this school English was a drag. It was: read a book, write about it; read a book, write about it. And do this and that. And she never gave us a break and we never had any fun with the teacher...

...before we stayed on each item too long and it got boring. I did not like it...

Reported Level of Skills in English at Wagner

Difficult

...English is ok here except when they want a four-page essay. I cannot write that much. I don't know what to say...

...we are still writing book reports and little stories. If we misspell a word we have to write it out five times. We did that in grade 2! Anyway, I forget it again in five minutes...

...I don't mind English here when we discuss things. But reading and writing I don't like. I never have been for reading and writing...

Easy

...English before was easy and here it is not hard either. Still, I would rather have less work; not as many stories to write...

...before I did not get it. And if you could not keep up with the class you pretty well had it. I don't have much trouble with English here. I have been able to write letters and that. For me it could be a little more complicated...

...here English is easy. We have taken all the stuff we get this year already...

Interesting

...I did not like English before. It was just work, work, work. Here you have to do the work too but you still have lots of fun with the teacher. And it seems she is always pushing us. When we have discussions it is really interesting...

...here English is different; it's interesting. I like the reading, the paragraphs, the discussions. I like to voice my own opinion...

...I like English here. The teacher does not hammer it into you, just talks normal. It is interesting. The English here helps in reading, getting better speech, and it is better for a job...

Too Much Writing

...now in the third year I would like much more discussion. But all we do is writing and writing. One can learn only so much from writing. I want to improve my vocabulary but I want to do it in a way that is my way. And for me it is not by always writing...

...it seems we write all the time. We write whatever we look at and we have to get it done. I don't like that too much...

...English here would be ok if it was not for the writing we have to do...

...what we do is read a book and then write a report. I find that ridiculous. What you put down is your own opinion and somebody else's opinion will definitely be different. And if the teacher cares for a particular opinion, the student will get a better mark. How can this be marked fairly?...

Discussions

...here you can have discussions after the work is done. It helps improve my speech. Discussions help me more, I learn more, than from our little reading and writing...

...English before was difficult, here it is easier. Nobody gets mad at you and they help you more. And we discuss different topics which we did not do in the other schools. I don't speak up much, I am scared I might say something wrong. But sometimes I do, not often...

...here I have changed. When we had discussion I was quiet, always afraid to say much if anything. It depends still on the topic we are discussing. If it is something that makes me mad, I want to take part in it. It only started this year. This is my last year...

...the only thing I found hard before I came to this school was communication with others. I just hated school and everyone in it, feeling rebellious. I still cannot write down my ideas, but orally I can get out my feelings ok now...

Feel They Have Substantially Improved

...I find I understand it more. I took reading exercises in the reading lab, it helped quite a bit...

...In reading I took this special course in the reading lab and my pronunciation got better. And I know now how to break up words. I can pick the main idea out of something that I read now...

...I never was good in spelling. I really must say this has improved here. Reading before was also difficult. I did not read that much in the other school. The same with writing. It could be the marks we get here. You get a higher mark and you feel better. You feel like writing more and you do. And the more you know you get better the more you write. I never got seventies or eighties but now I do...

...I had a hard time reading. I could read and would not know what I read. Now I read more thoroughly and slowly and think while I am reading. I read properly now, learned it in Wagner...

...I get through pretty good here. I feel I am doing it. Maybe the teachers don't think I can do it very well, but I feel I am doing much better...

...before my highest mark in English was 33. That was in

grade 8 and 9. What gave me trouble was my vocabulary. I never read or anything. I just did not care about school. But all I get here are top marks. And I read books and even poetry if I have a chance. And any word I don't know the meaning of, I go straight to the dictionary. I guess I have ambition now. And the teacher here is really good. She doesn't say, "I know you cannot do it but try your best". She says, "you can do it", and I just have to have that little bit of encouragement that I can do it. And then I try harder and get better marks...

Much Work

...this year we have a different teacher and she is tougher. She watches you to see that all the work gets done. She kind of pushes you. She knows your limits. You can do it at your own speed but you have to get it done. I kind of enjoy it...

...it is really not easy. It requires a lot of concentration and listening to the teacher to get exactly what one is supposed to understand...

...if you have a reading problem, which I think most of us kids here have, you don't have to take a reading course. This is kind of funny. I thought if I came to Wagner I could learn how to read out loud and really like it. And then one misses part of the English or math class, which one does not want to miss. Because it would mean you have to take work home, which I don't want to do...

Boring

...I did not understand grammar in the other school. Here it is boring. The teacher talks too much. I would like to learn the things I did not understand in the other school...

...here it is so boring. We have taken all the stuff already we are taking this year. I would like it as I had it before when I learned something. It was playing games all the time, educational games like Spelling Bees. It was fun and you still learned...

...I lost my interest in school. School is nothing to me...

Mathematics

In categorizing remarks referring to arithmetic, an arrangement similar to the one used for grouping responses to the subject English was applied.

Samples of students' answers pertaining to mathematics in the general system (regular and modified classes) are given first. These are followed by statements referring to mathematics in W. P. Wagner High

School.

Mathematics in Integrated School

Insufficient Help

...I found I had trouble with math and nobody could help me because I missed quite a bit of school. And nobody took the time to help me...

...I always found math kind of hard. I did not understand how to solve problems and stuff like that. And the teachers would not help me. They thought if other kids can do it, you can do it too...

...it was complicated for me in the other school. They showed you once on the board how to do it and then they gave you a book...

Unable to Understand Mathematics

...math has always been my downfall. I never passed math in my life. I usually made marks between 20 and 35 on my tests. I hated it when we had to read our marks out loud, from high to low. And I always got the lowest in the room...

...math was about the worst subject before. I just could not understand it. And since I could not understand it I just sluffed through most of my classes...

Disliked Mathematics

...I think I could have done math before but I just did not want to do it. So I just put down some stuff on paper and handed it in. I understood it vaguely...

...I never really liked math before. I only found out this year that I can handle math...

New Math was Too Hard

...I did not really know what was happening. The teacher was trying to pile this modern math stuff on us, these little swiggles. Me, I rather just add, subtract, multiply and divide, but not this new math...

...in grade 5 they switched from the old math to the new one-half way through the year. This really threw me...

Mathematics in Wagner

More Help Received

...I never did understand math before. I have learned more things here than I have heard before. The teacher took the time to teach me. I still do not understand everything...

...before, my main problem was new math. Here, the first year was like a refresher course. It came all back to me. The teacher was good. He was like a friend. If you needed help, he was there. He piled on the work as much as we were able to do. The only thing I find hard now are the roots. I cannot learn it in class from my math teacher, so my shop teacher is helping me. He teaches me after the other boys have left. He knows the easiest ways to teach it for the trade because he is a tradesman...

Interesting

...When I was in the other school math was hard and I got bored and did not pay attention. But here I like it. I understand it better and it is more interesting...

...the class works well, everybody seems to understand it. And when someone is not sure, he is right there to help. Our teacher makes it interesting and he makes us realize that we need it to get somewhere...

Helpful for Future Trade

...here math is something that has to do with your trade, not some garbage that is not going to do you any good the rest of your life anyway...

...I am not really good in math, never was. I don't like it and try to avoid it. But I have to learn it for my trade...

Better Explained

...the teacher must have been pretty fed up with me here at the beginning because I did not know very much. But now my marks have gone up high. What we take up I understand quite well because the teacher explains it really well. She takes time to teach us well. I like math here...

...here math is much different. I understand it all because the teacher explains everything. And if you still tell her you don't understand, she sits down with you and explains it until it is clear in your head...

Boring

...I have never been good in math. Here I don't find it too bad. We are not as many pupils in a class and we get individual help. But I am just not interested in that work, so I don't do as well in math. It is boring...

...I had trouble in math before. Here I think I could do it. I just don't want to do it. It seems immaterial to me, stupid. Why should I do it? I did it in grade 6. I know it somewhat. I cannot say I know it perfectly, but I did it then and I don't want to do it again. You just get lousy marks because you hate it...

Difficult

...in the other school math was a lot easier. We did not take graphs and volumes and scales...

...in some grades I found math hard, especially in grade 8. I like math here. The stuff we take now is that algebra. It is coming slowly but surely...

TEACHER TRAITS

This section provides excerpts of students' statements dealing with teacher behavior which has been organized into four major categories. The first two consist of pupils' observations of teacher traits perceived as a) beneficial or b) unfavourable at the elementary and junior high school level. The other two major categories refer to teacher characteristics at the W. P. Wagner School.

In connection with teacher descriptions, rather frequent references to class size, corporal punishment, and sentiments that teachers in Wagner School were 'better' than the ones in the integrated school, have been reported. These statements did not lend themselves to grouping under the four major categories; therefore, three separate categories were formed. Sample statements of each separate category are included.

'Good Teachers' in Integrated Schools

Concerned

...I learned more in these two years than in the other years because you could really talk with him. He was more interested in kids than most other teachers...

...the teacher pointed out my downfalls to me and also talked with Mom about them. This got me closer to Mom too...

...when I repeated grade 5 the teacher would joke with me and talk individually with me...

...if the teacher saw somebody hurt he went out and helped. Or if he saw an uneven fight, he would break it up. But if he saw an even fight he would let it go on so that they could get rid of their hostilities; not haul them into the office and suspend them...

...she understood me in a way...

...the modified grade 8 teacher helped me to get into this school. He also straightened me out and made me realize that there is more to life than living. We have to live for a purpose...

...he did not really help me in school but helped me to look at life...

Motivate Students to Work

...if I would be daydreaming she would not bawl me out for that but encourage me to get back to my work...

...this teacher was really good. She started to work me, and I found out that if I worked my marks would be better. I liked that teacher...

...she could do about anything with anybody. She could make us work. Because I liked her, I did not mind the work...

...he would take us out on weekends to the lake; sometimes a few of us and sometimes the whole class, on nature trips. He taught you so you wanted to learn...

Impartial

...this math teacher had miserable moods but he had no favourites. He did not like you because you were smarter or dumber...

Patient

...if you did not understand she would explain it to you, two, three times, if necessary. I guess this is why I made it that year. She had patience...

...if you did not get something the first time, she would help you out...

Gave Praise, Encouragement

...the reason I liked her is, she passed me with honors. And I still go to see her...

...usually I got 20's and 30's. We had an assignment to do and the woman counsellor helped me. The social teacher knew I had worked on it too. I got an 85 on it, that was the highest mark I ever got. I was so proud of it, really proud...

Flexible

...I did not go to school half the time in grade 7 because I did not like the people I had to go to school with. They were all a lot younger than I was. My teacher told me I might get into trouble because of attendance. But she gave

me good average marks according to the work I was capable of doing and did. I did just as much work as the rest of the students. She could have been like: "you were not here, why should I accept your work?" I could do it and bring it to her and she would accept it even though I was not in class. I don't know where I would be if it was not for her...

...the drama teacher was really nice. She let us pick the play we wanted to do and then worked with us...

Ability to Explain

...she would explain it at your level...

...when I did not understand a problem, he explained it in real details...

...I could understand her and she understood me...

...it was the way he taught, his method...

Helpful

...she came around and gave everybody help. She was not sitting at her desk but rather walking up and down the aisle and seeing how you were doing. If you had some difficulty she speeded you right up...

...she really helped me out. My marks had been down in grade 7. She helped me in modified 8 and I passed into regular grade 8...

...if I asked them, they helped me anytime they could. Or if I did not want any help, they left me alone because I don't want to be bugged by people if I don't want them to help me...

...he was fantastic. I could ask him questions. He made me stay after school till I got the math...

...I was ill and away from school for quite some time that year. She did help me when I came back. And I passed into the next grade with honors...

...most of them stressed that I was slow and they wanted to help me. Like this one teacher: he stayed after school and pointed out what he wanted to help us in. But as soon as school was out, I was gone also. I did not want to stay, so I got behind...

'Poor' Teachers in Integrated School

Unfriendly

...I hardly liked any teachers in the elementary grades because they would not listen to you. I did not ask them

for help, I thought they would yell at me. Because when I asked, she would call me stupid, and why don't you listen. And I had been listening. So I did not ask any more...

...if I had a bad teacher I tried to get along with him in the best way I knew how and I found it usually worked. In grade 7 I had a pretty sarcastic character, he used to give me the strap about every day. Straps for fooling around in the class. But I think he had a fairly short temper too...

...that teacher was mean to all of us. Every day she yelled at us, found something else to yell about...

...some that just came from the university bothered me. I guess they did not know too much about students yet...

...teachers were all yelling at you. If you did not get anything done, they yelled...

...I disliked especially the teacher in grade 3. I could not stand her, she was crabby all the time. She made me really nervous and I did not get good marks with her...

Unconcerned

...they let you do whatever you wanted to do...

...in regular class they went ahead whether you were finished or not...

...the teachers were: "oh, the heck with you"...

...if anybody got behind, your tough luck...

...you were sort of left out...

...the teacher did not care about you, as long as you got your work done...

...the teacher just overlooked the ones who had problems with their work. Let them go at their own speed! Just helped the ones who were doing well. That is probably why I failed grade 3...

...you learned if you wanted to learn. If not, you just sat there...

Deterrent to Learning

...I got my face slapped in grade 1 and got kicked out into the hall. I said to myself, "I won't do anything for you". And I was bull-headed to everyone...

...I could not stand her and quit trying. I did not do anything and my marks went lower and lower...

...in grade 7 the math teacher was too easy. He left the answer book lying around and we could just copy them down. We had to learn on our own and this is why I did not care for math...

Unfair

...he favoured all the girls in the class and did not give a damn about boys. He always picked on me because I was not the type that sat back and was taking everything, whereas the other little kids: "yes, sir; yes, sir, we will do it"...

...in grade 5 the teacher always tried to be nice to me. It seemed to me like a false front that she was putting on all the time. I sensed that it was really sarcastic. She put me in a position where the other kids were sort of jumping at me. I felt she should not separate me from the rest of the class. It was not fair that she was extra nice to me and spent so much time with me...

...if you were smart, she was around all the time. But she did not have time to spend with ones that had trouble. Just as long as they were quiet...

...teachers bugged you about getting haircuts. They resented you if you did not get your hair cut. You were judged on the basis of haircuts...

Lack of Patience

...he was a real rough guy. If you did not do the work, he slapped you around. If you asked him a question because you did not hear him the first time, he slapped you also. He explained it, though, again. And if you still did not understand it, you asked your friends...

...he was really mean. Nobody could get along with him, everybody was scared of him...

...in grade 1 the teacher had no patience. If you could not get it right away, forget it, she would not go over it again; you would not have a second chance. That bothered me. This is maybe why I flunked...

...I had that teacher you were afraid to ask things because she would scream at you: "why don't you listen?"...

Discouraging, Made Derogatory Remarks

...she got really mad at me, called me "stupid" and things like "you don't know how to do anything right", and "you are so old and still in this grade and not passing"...

...he always brought up my sisters. They did that and that. And how come I was so dumb, she was such a brain. And one of them was dumb, but I was dumber than she was...

...and he blurted out: "you are retarded"...

...he told me I was the bully of the school which I was not...

...he was always ego-tripping, the big man. He wanted to make an impression. He beat you over the head with a yardstick if you did something wrong. This rallied me up, discouraged me from work...

...I used to hate the grade 6 teacher, he was like that: if you are smart, come to the front; if you are not, go to the back...

Inflexible, Authoritarian

...I did not get along with the grade 5 teacher. If I did not believe something she would never say: "it is not right because..." She would just say: "no, it is not right". And I did not get any explanations...

...he was strict. He ran the class like an army camp: calling you by last name, stand up when he walks in. I just don't like anyone being so strict and having such perfect order...

...she was just out of university and thought she was higher than you, better than you, because she had an education...

Little Ability to Explain

...he just gave you the work and if you did not have it done, he gave you other work to do. If one did not understand, he would say: "just read it in the book"...

...this teacher told the whole class only. If I wanted to know it in a little more detail, he just told me what he had told the class. He just repeated it...

...the social teacher would not explain anything to us. He just wrote on the board. This is what he did day after day after day...

Unwilling or Unable to Help

...none of them helped me. When I got caught cheating on tests they gave me a hard time...

...they really bugged me: you asked for help and they just ignored you...

...they did not help enough. You wondered whether they cared about you at all. And then you got behind and got poor marks...

...they threw the book at you and told you to do it. They

showed you once and then sat behind the desk and worked...

Traits of 'Good' Teachers in Wagner School

Friendly

...in this place I found some pretty nice teachers and they are still nice...

...most of the teachers are great here...

...teachers here are really friendly...

Concerned

...you could go and talk to him about your troubles at home. He would talk to you even after school...

...you can talk to them like to your friends...

...they know a little bit more about teaching as well. They would not charge through a subject and keep on going; they wait around for the students. They don't think only of getting through the subject but also about getting the kids through as well...

...they are understanding...

Motivate Students to Work

...here they understand you; understand kids have problems. And they will help you. They will not just let you sit in the cold. And you have a good time and learn a lot more too...

...they take a few minutes out to talk to individuals. They make sure everybody knows what is going on. You learn more...

...the teachers here know how to teach. They can teach you something without kicking you around the room so you will learn...

Impartial

...he listens to your side. He never draws just one conclusion out of the deal...

...he made me wait my turn, but just the same, he gave me help...

...and not picking favourites! I think that is about the best thing that I have seen in this school...

Patient

...they try to reason with you here...

...when I came here I acted big. But all the teachers here thought I had something in me that would be good, so they did not really mind my tough manners...

...here, if you don't understand, they won't yell at you: "Why don't you listen?" They show you again and again, it does not make them mad...

...as many times as you ask them they will try to explain it to you again...

Give Encouragement and Praise

...they don't have the idea, "I am the teacher, you are the student; I am smarter than you". And in the learning situation they take everyone individually...

...here it is way different. They respect you. You can talk to them about anything. This goes for all the teachers here, that makes me get along really great. Before it was rotten...

Ability to Explain

...he really knows how to get things across. And if one did not get it at the time, he made sure he got it during the year...

...if you disagree with him, he argues the point out with you so you can see whether you are right or wrong...

...they all help me. I guess it is because they explain things better...

Flexible

...you can do what you want as long as it has to do with what the class is taking...

...they help you and they go off the book a little bit...

...most of them also listen to your point of view...

Helpful

...if you get stuck the teachers come and show you how to do it...

...if you needed help he would not ignore you...

...even if you don't ask, if you don't understand a problem from your paper, they get the idea from your puzzled face and come and help you...

...the science teacher tries to help me but does not succeed (laughs), the English teacher tries to help me but does not succeed (laughs). The math teacher the same thing...

...he was good, he took time to help me. If I had a problem, even [illegible] or personal, I went to him. I kept up this friendship [illegible] next year when he was not my teacher any more. He co[illegible] to help me...

...one of them took his lunch hour to help me; and helped me quite a bit. One tried to get us jobs...

Traits of 'Poor' Teachers in Wagner

Unfriendly

...a couple of them bother me. They try to push me too hard...

...at the beginning I did not like the business education teacher. I was skipping too much and she was really getting down to me. Now she is ok...

...some teachers, if you don't get your work done they nag you a lot...

...I don't like the teachers who tell you: "cheer up, your employer is not going to like you gloomy. And you are not going to chew gum on the job, or be bitchy. You would be fired"...

...the math teacher and I, we don't get along. He has the idea I bug him (laughs). Boy, do I bug him...

Unconcerned

...in the first two years the English teachers were pretty good. Not so the one I have now. If you want to work, you work. If you don't, you just sit there...

...all the teachers in this school bother me but not to a great extent. I feel they are just out for themselves...

Unfair

...one teacher says I don't try hard. But there are times when I sit with my hand up during the whole class and get no help if there is something I don't understand. She goes around the room. Goes to the kids who speak out instead of putting up their hands...

...the teacher in English is pressuring me more than the other kids; to write poetry or do things for the class...

Unwilling or Unable to Help

...he just tells you to do it and he does not come and help you. Once in a while he might tell you if you cannot do it. But the other times he says: "there is a dictionary, go and look it up". We might as well have dictionaries! What is a teacher for?

...one bugs me. You say something to him and he turns around and looks at somebody else. And you say to yourself, "Well, that is fine, I won't talk to you again"...

Discouraging, Made Derogatory Remarks

...there is this about teachers: they can have a bad day and you can't. When they are miserable you are supposed to overlook it. But when you are bad, you are sent to the principal for insubordination. That is wrong. Teachers should realize that. Some do, though...

...this teacher is hard to get along with. You ask her a question and she asks you a whole bunch of things which are not her business...

Little Ability to Explain

...she just tells us to do something but does not explain it well. And she marks us really low because we never hand anything in...

...there is a generation gap. Since they are not our generation they don't seem to be able to teach what our generation wants. You can talk to them, sure, like to your friends. But when it comes down to teaching they don't talk my language...

Inflexible, Authoritarian

...this one teacher bosses you around. I do anything, as long as a teacher asks me, as long as he does not demand it...

...the math teacher wants everybody to do things his way...

...he does not accept the work the way I am doing it, and it is the only way I can do it...

ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES UNDER TEACHER BEHAVIOR

Class Size

One out of ten subjects attributed the apparently insufficient help received and/or the impersonal class climate to the large number of students in the regular classes. The following remarks express the youngsters' opinions:

...nobody really helped me. They would have, if they would have had time. Most of the teachers did not have time since they had such large classes. And I have to have things explained to me very well before I can do them...

> ...here the teachers are different. They spend a lot of time with the kids. They have smaller classes and more time to help. Already in modified grade 7 things had changed and I got more help...
>
> ...before you could not learn much. The teacher did not have much time to look at your work. They had over 30 students in their classes...

Corporal Punishment

The reports of corporal punishment were obtained incidentally. The proportion of pupils who claimed to have suffered this experience in the integrated school is 29 out of 80. The actual number of subjects who were 'taught' by this method very likely is greater, as some youngsters might not disclose such humiliating treatment easily, especially since they were not questioned about it by the interviewer.

From their report it was apparent that corporal punishment was meted out to youngsters for various reasons. Students conceded that some beatings were 'justified' because they were provoked and were consequences of their disruptive behavior. Corporal punishment was also handed out to pupils who were unable or unwilling to do the assigned work. The following comments are examples:

> ...I got the strap about every day. It was for never doing my homework and for always fooling around and pestering the rest of the class. I was showing off...
>
> ...I tried to get into trouble with the teachers; tried to get them mad at me. And then I would be sent down to the office and get the strap, turn around and start bugging them again...
>
> ...in grade 6, if you did not get your work done, she took you into the preparation room and you got the strap. I got it every day. I got so used to it, it did not even bother me. I would just hold out my hands, get the strap, and walk away laughing. Then I had enough and got mad at her. I told her to leave me alone and I would not accept the strap any more. So she handed the strap to that male teacher. I told him if he gave me the strap, I would kick him. And I kicked him too...
>
> ...I don't know whether this has anything to do with it, but when I was in grade 2 the teacher used to hit us across the knuckles with the ruler. So I started to get scared of

teachers, did not trust them...

No mention was made of corporal punishment being applied in Wagner.

Teachers in Wagner are 'Better'

When the subjects switched from their descriptions of teachers in the integrated school to the ones they have in Wagner, they often started this part by spontaneously asserting that they liked the Wagner teachers more. Samples of their sentiments are the following remarks:

> ...teachers here, I think, are better than the ones I had in the previous years...
>
> ...when I started this program I began to get along with the teachers again and my marks got better...
>
> ...they are really nice, the teachers here. They are a lot like us kids. You can express your feelings to them. It is not as if there is a gap between the teachers and the kids...
>
> ...in this school the teachers are just different. I don't know why. They are sort of counselors and teachers. If you had a school or social problem, you went to them. You were not pushed away...
>
> ...in the other schools teachers would not waste their time with you. You were supposed to be scared of them, and you sort of were. Here it is way different, this goes for all the teachers, they respect you...

PEER RELATIONSHIP

The comments on peer relationship were grouped into: a) social interactions with classmates in integrated school, and b) subjects' relationships with their agemates in Wagner.

In a) and b) categories for both, positive and negative experiences, were established.

Positive Peer Relationships in Integrated School

Accepted

> ...they did not bother me much or laughed...
>
> ...in regular class the kids help me with the schoolwork. And they were always nice and fooled around with me...
>
> ...I had friends. I was kind of big and older and some did not especially like me. But I had friends to fool around with...

No Difference Before and Now

...before it was pretty good. And here it is about the same...

...I had no difficulty with friends. I had lots of them to fool around with. This did not change when I made low marks...

...here too, I have friends. I am friends with everybody, the whole class. I never had any trouble in this way...

Negative Peer Relationship in Integrated School

Few Friends

...I was usually stuck in a class with diggers who got in with the crack of a book. And doing as they were told. And "yes, sir; no, sir", which I really did not care for...

...when I flunked in grade 3 some of them thought they were better than me. And in grade 8 I had again a lot of trouble with quite a few students. So I just shut off the world and did my own thing my own way...

...I did not have too many friends. I was sort of on my own because I was dumb...

...in the regular school they compete. And I could not read...

Name Calling

...when I went to modified in grade 8, the regular grade 8 thought they were better. They called us "stupid class"...

...they always called me "dumb" or "retard" because I could not read. But I did not mind...

...before they called me "dumb", and "stupe" and "reject". Just dumb names that me feel like I was really retarded...

Not Accepted

...in the other school most kids' parents had quite a bit of money. The kids acted high and mighty and pushed their weight around...

...they were not too bad. They just kept to their own groups when playing. Only in gym class did we play together. When I went to modified it was better. We were all in the same boat; all slow...

...kids who were not in modified behaved kind of funny towards us...

...they did not want to be friends. And it wasn't me, it was them. One day they would talk to me and the next day they just let me stand there and walk away, as if you were queer or something. They looked down at you...

Age-Size Difference

...kids will be kids and they naturally tease you about your age...

...I was two years behind. First of all I could not start till I was seven and then I flunked grade 1. This made me quite a bit older than anyone else. I was quite a bit taller than the other kids, felt like a giant among them; felt self-conscious about it...

...it is mostly your age. If you are older than other kids you are thinking in different lines...

...I did not really like that class. All the boys were little teeny-boppers who came up to my shoulder. These kids did not know anything. I could not have been part of that class even if I would have wanted to...

Being Bullied

...there was a bunch of big guys, six feet tall, always bullying me and stealing my lunch, hanging my jacket out of the window. Generally just to show off to the others...

...I had problems up to grade 8. Before most of the kids picked on the ones that were kind of dumb. In 8 it stopped because I got into modified.

...it was not really bad. Once in a while I got beaten up; slaughtered...

...they all were against me because I had so low marks and they used to tease me...

Fights

...when they needed me to beat up somebody for them, then: "can you protect me"? I was always there. Otherwise I was not around. That is when they noticed me: when they needed my help...

...from grade 1 to 6 I always beat up the boys, because I was bigger than the boys. I was a tomboy; I beat them up and threw snowballs at them...

...they kept bugging me. They said, "ah, come on, you can do it". Then I got so mad I started punching them...

...I did not get along with anybody before. I was always a real tyrant. I had to have everything my own way or I would get mad and beat them up. Once one of the parents came out and I told her to kiss it. I was really rude...

Felt Dumb

...I guess everybody accepted me as being dumb. Nobody ever

said so, so I don't really know...

...they treated me as if I was an ignorant idiot...

...you could not say what you wanted in class because you got laughed at if you were wrong. So I would not say anything, just shut up...

...we were always put into two groups: the slow ones and the fast ones. You felt low, and down, and put out...

Positive Peer Relationship in Wagner

Feel Freer

...around here everybody is free in class. You don't have to worry about what you say because everybody makes some mistakes...

...here I can be myself. Nobody is trying to imitate me. I really like the people here, they are themselves...

All are Equal

...in this school I fit in better; we are almost all at the same level. Before I was lower and they were higher. Here I am about the same as everybody else and I enjoy myself...

...here most of us are the same. Our parents still have not got much money but here it does not matter. They treat you as equal...

...here they are all alright. I am with my age group...

...here they do not care if you cannot read because everyone of the kids has a problem...

Accepted

...before the kids did not want to play with me. They thought they were too good for me because I was part Chinese. Here nobody pays attention to my nationality and I have made more friends than I ever had before; lots of friends...

...here the kids like to talk and do things together. They are interested in you. And I am interested in what they are doing...

...I like this school a lot. One can get along with everybody. No one thinks he is better. Before I used to be a real loner, did not like to be with people...

Friendlier

...here they are much better, not so stuck up...

...I think the kids here are really great. They come up to

you and say "hi" and you are really friendly. Some know your name but you don't know theirs', smile. They are different from the kids before...

...here the kids are friendly. They are real good to get along with. There is seldom a disagreement. I like the school and the students in it...

Negative Peer Relationship in Wagner

Not Identifying with Classmates

...I had a lot of friends before. Here I have no friends really. I don't like to make friends here. I don't like most of the kids here. I don't want to talk about them...

...when I came to this school everybody thought it was just a place to keep people off the street; all these tough guys. When I got into this school everybody had a real low opinion of me. When my friends outside say, "you are from Wagner", I take it as a joke. I think it is funny. I laugh with them. I AM NOT SUPPOSED TO BE IN HERE...

...I don't like the kids here. They do not think as I do. I don't like them at all; they are crazy. They are right out of it. They don't know what they are doing...

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Replies to the question: What is the opinion of your parents, and friends from the outside about the Wagner School? were divided into the following groups:

(a) Sentiments of subjects' parents.

(b) Sentiments of Wagner students, which, according to the records and direct student remarks, appears generally the same as the views of their parents.

(c) Perceived opinions of friends who attend different schools in the city.

(d) The views of various adults in the community.

These four mentioned major categories were also organized according to positive and negative expressions.

Other sections were:

(e) The youngsters' explanations as to why outsiders hold negative

views about Wagner students.

(f) Expressions of how the subjects deal with the unfavourable opinions of their friends and of the community.

Contents of Opinions About Wagner

Positive Opinions

...parents think it is ok. They were glad that I had found a school where I had strong interests, a place where I have fun and can set my goals...

...my parents like it. They think it has helped me an awful lot. Before, I did not talk much about school; this has changed since I go here...

...every time they hear or see something about this school they can hardly wait to come home. They get excited, "Oh, did you know that"? They think the school is fantastic...

...they knew I could not go back to a regular high school after being a year in a private school. I just did not have the qualification...

Visited School

...they think it is a great school. They have been here for every open house and each time they have come they have enjoyed it. They are quite pleased to be in a city that has such a school...

...my Mom thinks it is really a great school; a marvelous school. She has been here for open house. And when they had the parents' discussion group, she came for that also for a month, even though sometimes she was tired she went...

...when my modified grade 8 teacher told my Mom about this school she wanted to see it first; wanted to know what it is like. After she saw it, she wanted me to try it for a year. But now she wants me to stay...

For Students with Problems

...some think this school is not good. It is just there for people with problems. And maybe it is...

...there are some kids in this school that are a little different than other people. But I think it is because they had problems in their lives...

...my parents think it is great that there is a school you can come to if you are having difficulty...

For Students Desiring Trade Training

...my parents think Wagner is terrific. They are telling me what a chance I have going to this school, like it is the greatest thing that ever hit the world. It's probably because I am in automotives...

...Dad knows I am enjoying Wagner and Mom likes it also. At least I am getting trained for a vocation. They think there should be more schools like this one...

Offers More Opportunity And/Or Freedom

...my friends have seen hair down to the shoulders and they wonder how we get away with it. Some of the guys said that we have quite a bit of freedom...

...they think it is really nice and they are glad I can come here and have the experiences that kids in other schools don't have, like working in different vocational areas in the first year...

...this school is very good because it gives you a training, not just academic stuff. It should help you find a job when you leave. The work experience is great about this school. It gives you a chance to actually work on the job...

Prevents School Dropout

...I would have probably quit school a long time ago if it wouldn't be for Wagner. My interest is to work with motors...

...this school is ok as far as the academic and vocational subjects go. If they did not have this school we all would be out on the street...

...I think my parents rather have me go here than to any other school. If I still would have to be in an academic school, I would have quit...

Students-Parents Differ

...my parents think the school is great. They did not get it from me...

...I guess they think it is ok. I don't care. When people visit us they brag about Wagner--makes me feel like an idiot. Vocational School! I feel dumb when my parents say I go there--I don't want everybody to know...

...when I told them that the counselor wanted me to go to Wagner, they acted as if I should not go. Wagner has a name that only people who are retarded go there. We had three hours' talk and they finally agreed...

Opinions of Friends Who Attend Different Schools

School Is Fairly Unknown

...friends that do not go to Wagner have never heard of it...

...Wagner is not too well known. Most people don't seem to care enough to find out. They are ignorant about what the school is here for...

...I don't say too much about Wagner and they have not heard about it...

Most Friends Are Here

...I don't have too many friends any more that don't come here...

...just about all my friends go here. The other ones, to them it does not matter what school I go to...

Friends Would Like to be Here

...one of my friends used to say, "you must be nuts to go to Wagner." And now he will be coming too. He takes it all back and says it is a real good school...

...some of my friends want to go to this school themselves. It has more to offer than other high schools, like more tools and one can learn different vocations...

For Dumb

...a lot of them really put you down and Wagner. I think the main reason is that they don't know what it is like. I heard some people say it is a school for retarded kids...

...they don't say too much, just things like, "say, you are going to a dummy school". I just laugh a little bit...

Name Calling

...friends joke around, figure Wagner is for a bunch of creeps. Just a bunch of weirdos going here...

...my friends are pretty great; don't think the school is that crazy. Because I know myself that I am not crazy. And they know me. And when they say it, they are referring to somebody else who is worse off than myself. And I don't say that because I am conceited...

...there are some that think it is next to a Winnifred Stewart kind of school...

...some people say this is a junkyard school...

After Visiting Friends Have Positive Opinion

...not too many of my friends have seen the school. The ones who have think it is great and say there should be more schools like that...

...my friends were kind of leery about Wagner; asked, "what is wrong with you"? They don't know much about it. But once they see it, they think the school is pretty good...

Laugh About School

...most of them laugh when they hear Wagner. They think it is just a school for guys who are extremely stupid...

...most of the kids that still go to high school, when I say I go to Wagner, say "you are kidding; no, come on". And when I tell them I really go here, they just look at me and nine out of ten times they start laughing and make some smart joke, like "you must be really dumb, hey"?...

Experienced Discrimination

...I was talking to this girl downtown. When I said I was going to Wagner, she was shying away as if I had a disease or something. They are misinformed. They think the school is for dummies and they don't want them around...

...some of the girls from outside mind that I go to Wagner. But most of the ones I meet are not too smart themselves...

...the girls don't mind, but the guys are a little touchy about Wagner, especially if they go to the regular high school. And you feel like an idiot telling them your dumb-people school. It embarrasses you...

Responses to Outside Opinions

Outsiders Are Misinformed

...they don't seem to realize that a lot of guys here don't have problems. They want a job where they can use their favoured ability, where they can learn a trade...

...they don't know what it is really for. They have the wrong impression...

Heard Only Positive Opinions

...all that friends want to know is whether it is a good school or not. I never heard anything that bothered me...

...all remarks I have heard have been good. It is for kids who need a break from other high schools. They come here and give it a try and see how they can cope...

Try to Change Negative Opinion

...I don't think too much about their talk but I try to change their opinion about Wagner...

...at first they did not think it was too good. But when I tell them about the things we do here, they like it...

Negative Opinion Is in Joke

...friends say it is a stupid school, jokingly. They don't really mean it...

...my brother and his friends are teasing me about this dumb school. I don't pay attention to them; I just laugh. It is just teasing...

Ignore Negative Opinion

...friends just joke about it. And you don't have to listen. You can learn to live with it...

...some think they are kind of smart and that Wagner is for dumb kids. I just ignore them. They got 80's in their subjects and I did not get such good marks. And maybe it is for dumb people...

For Cripples

...some of my friends have been here. A couple of kids are crippled in this school. They have seen them and now they think it is for crippled people, nuts, and that...

For Lazy or Slow

...a lot of kids are not here because they are slow but they are here because they would not work...

...we are slow learners and we learn better here. That is all I think we are; we are not dumb...

Students Not Bothered by Negative Opinion

...some downgrade Wagner; they know the kids come from modified. It is what I am doing that counts, not what they are saying...

...I don't really care what they think. It is a vocational school and I am glad I got the opportunity to go...

Students Bothered by Negative Opinion

...they just say "retard" and I cannot take it and start fighting...

...my parents do not like the special yellow buses. My friends think they are "Winnie" buses. They think every

one in the school is nuts. It bothers me...

...I was bothered by Mom's remark, as a joke: if my sister made a mistake, she would say, "what school are you going to, Wagner"? I said, "I don't think that is very funny." My sister used to say it. But now they don't any more...

Not Telling Outsiders

...my friends don't say very much because I don't discuss it...

...I don't tell anyone that I go to this school because they think it is such a joint...

...my friends don't know about Wagner except for a couple, and they don't care...

...I don't talk to my friends about Wagner. They go to different schools...

Proud of Wagner

...I don't call it a school. I call it a place to be at. Most people I talked to, ninety percent, think the school is a place where they beat you, where they make you learn. Shape up or ship out. But here it is different, we got freedom. I think this school is really a place to be at...

...some of them, my close friends, think Wagner is ok. I brag to them because I get such good marks most of the time...

...I don't really care what other people say. I don't say too much back. I know what this school is doing for me. What it means to me is all that matters...

...they don't know about it, therefore they have no right to comment bad on it. As far as I am concerned, the school does wonders for people...

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study focused on the experiences of low achievers in the general school system, and particularly in W. P. Wagner School. This chapter will present a brief review of the problem, the sample population, the areas investigated, and the procedures applied. The answers obtained to the questions posed at the beginning of this research will be discussed, as well as implications and suggestions for further study.

SUMMARY

Only students who are unable to achieve sufficiently to keep up with arbitrary grade standards in regular school, that is grade failures, are admitted to Wagner, a vocational high school. Yet the records of about 63 percent of these youngsters show that intelligence tests credit them with normal mental capability. Since low intelligence is apparently not responsible for their poor school performance, other possible influences, such as low socio-economic status, and unfavourable teacher and peer relationship, were considered.

The sample consisted of 80 pupils, 40 from year I and 40 from year III of the three-year vocational program at Wagner. The 40 students from each of the stated years were made up of 10 boys and 10 girls of low socio-economic parents, and 10 boys and 10 girls from other-than-low socio-economic background.

The areas investigated were: 1) school history, 2) subject matter difficulty, 3) student-teacher relationship, 4) peer relationship, and 5) outsiders' opinions of Wagner attenders. For areas 2, 3, and 4

comparison of regular school with Wagner were included.

Five open-ended questions, inquiring into the above topics, were presented to the students in interview fashion. The interviews were taped, later typed out, categorized, and content analysed.

The major findings of this study demonstrated that the student pupulation of the W.P. Wagner School was predominantly from low socio-economic homes and members of large families. Nearly all pupils' school history showed several grade failures. The students attributed their low success in academic learning to a large degree to their own insufficient effort, but they held unsatisfactory teacher and peer relationship also responsible. The least blame was assigned to curriculum difficulty. At the W. P. Wagner School interaction with teachers and classmates were perceived as generally positive in nature, and attitude to school learning was reported to have improved. Finally, most participants have been confronted with derogatory remarks because they are Wagner attenders and have learned to cope with the remarks in various ways.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to obtain data regarding the Wagner students' background and school experiences which might have affected their academic development. It was also proposed to examine the participants' perceptions of the attitudes of outsiders to Wagner attenders. The questions to which this research was to provide some answers, and which have been stated in Chapter I, will now be discussed on the basis of the analysis of the data of this study.

Question 1: What was the prevalent pattern of grade failure of the Wagner students?

As Table 7 illustrates, one-quarter of the subjects experienced

grade failure in their first two years of school. A second quarter of the pupils were first designated as non-attainers in their third or fourth grade. Another 31.25 percent first failed to obtain passing marks in grades five or six. After six years of school 81.25 percent of the participants had failed to reach minimum grade requirement at least once.

Grade failure in integrated school for most Wagner students had occurred with rather considerable frequency: 43.75 percent of the subjects were failed four times or more; 8.75 percent were failed six times, and another 8.75 percent seven times.

The above presented figures indicate that the prevalent pattern of the school history of the Wagner students was: a) first grade failure usually occurred in the elementary school; and b) inability to change the 'low achiever' self-image, as was demonstrated by most subjects' repeated grade failures.

It appears that children do not recover easily, if at all, from being marked grade failure.

Every grade failure experience is probably accompanied by a lowering of self-esteem and a lowering of achievement expectation. This might not be too pronounced if the label of non-attainer is incurred only once; but if a pupil suffers this designation more frequently, the detrimental effect on his future performance may be considerable. A survey, The problem of failure in school (Wall et al., 1962, p. 10), concludes that even a single experience of non-attainment may result in an "attitude of anxiety, rejection of school, defensive laziness or passive unwillingness to try" which colours such pupils' subsequent school careers. This hypothesis seems to apply to the subjects of this study and suggests an explanation for their rather frequent grade failure despite their average intelligence.

Question 2: What is the Wagner students' perception of the subject matter difficulty in regular school and in Wagner?

The students' assessment of their performance in English and mathematics in integrated school, as depicted in Table 10, demonstrates that the large majority, or 71.25 percent, did not cope well in these subject areas. More females than males reported English and mathematics as 'difficult'. The other-than-low socio-economic girls group contains the highest proportion of members who rated these academic subjects as 'difficult'; the low socio-economic boys make up the smallest proportion, which is 60 percent.

At Wagner (Table 11) more boys stated that English is 'difficult' than did girls. The opposite is the case for mathematics where approximately twice as many females spoke of struggle with mathematics than did males. Very few pupils of the low socio-economic male and female groups considered English as 'difficult' in Wagner. The proportion of youngsters who reported mathematics as 'difficult' in Wagner is greatest for the low socio-economic female group and smallest for the other-than-low socio-economic male group.

That the Wagner students recalled their English and mathematics courses in integrated school generally as 'difficult' is not surprising, since their transfer to the vocational school is evidence enough that they did not master these subjects. What needed to be ascertained was how these students appraised their performance in these areas at Wagner, where the English and mathematics programs are vocationally orientated and students are assigned to various classes according to their established level of knowledge. What is the relevancy of these data to curriculum planning? Some writers in special education (Dunn, 1968; Johnson, 1962) have claimed that segregated education does not provide adequate challenge for their pupils. As the main group of the Wagner

students (three-quarters in English and 40 per cent in mathematics) expressed that they can manage the academic subjects alright, and considerably smaller segments found them either difficult (approximately one-tenth in English and one-third in mathematics) or easy (the remainders), one could conclude that instruction in Wagner produces a proper amount of stimulation. According to Atkinson (1958) individuals perform best if tasks are of moderate difficulty. If the probability of success at tasks appears too low, the response is often avoidance of them; if tasks are too easily accomplished, boredom might result.

Applying Atkinson's theory to the Wagner attenders' perception of the academic subjects in the regular school as too 'difficult', one can deduce that such an attitude might have inhibited their self-confidence and desire to attempt designed tasks.

Question 3: How do educationally backward students in the regular classroom interpret their teachers' attitudes towards them?

The students of the other-than-low socio-economic groups gave more descriptions of 'helpful', 'friendly', and 'concerned' teacher traits than pupils of the low socio-economic groups; this trend is reversed for 'patience' to which the low socio-economic groups referred more than twice as frequently, especially 'lack of patience', than the other-than-low socio-economic groups.

The largest number of positive teacher characteristics were contributed by other-than-low socio-economic females, and the smallest number by low socio-economic males, who were followed very closely in number by the females of the same socio-economic status. Most examples of teacher traits not helpful to learning were expressed by low socio-economic girls and the least by the boys of the same social group.

Other-than-low socio-economic pupils remarked more frequently on teaching skills than did low socio-economic youngsters. Boys mentioned positive teaching style more often than girls; boys from the other-than-low socio-economic group also made the largest number of references to negative teaching style.

Although the pupils spoke of many teachers in integrated school as having positive qualities, these were greatly outnumbered by references to teachers whose behavior discouraged their learning efforts, and who seemed unfriendly and unconcerned with the low achievers' various problems (Table 12). It appears then, that children who do not perform well in school judge their teachers' behavior towards them as unfavourable.

Some researchers (Beasley, et al., 1966, p. 134) hypothesize that pupils who are low achievers place the responsibility for their performance on the teachers who "did not teach anything", or did not make their instruction interesting. It cannot be said that such an attitude was held by the majority of the youngsters under investigation; Table 8, perceived causes of grade failure, will verify this. As Table 14 indicates, Wagner students mostly blamed themselves for their unsatisfactory school work.

What might contribute to unsatisfactory teacher-low achiever relationship? Very likely students feel insecure for not having lived up to the teachers' expectations of them, and teachers feel frustrated with students working far below their capacity and wasting school time.

Lewis (1964) believes that some teachers exhibit repugnance toward stupidity; no doubt such teacher behavior would contribute to strained student-teacher relationship. West (1961) declared that teachers prefer to have low performers removed from general classes but dislike to teach the slow stream.

A further factor interfering with the learning process has been suggested by Johnson (1963, p. 48), who found that children who experience little success in school might develop into discipline problems.

These are only some of the probable causes of unsatisfactory teacher-low achiever relationship, and no doubt, there are many more.

Question 4: What is the students' perception of the pupil-teacher relationship in the W.P. Wagner High School?

Most descriptions of positive traits of Wagner teachers were provided by females, especially low socio-economic females. Males reported the larger number of examples of positive teaching style, the low socio-economic boys leading in contributions. Negative teacher characteristics were mentioned most frequently by the other-than-low socio-economic groups, the boys' remarks outnumbered those of the girls. The least instances of unfavourable teacher traits were volunteered by the low socio-economic females, though this group ranked highest in referring to negative teaching style.

The students' descriptions of Wagner teachers were generally of a complimentary nature, expressing that these teachers showed interest in their intellectual, as well as social, and personal development. They regarded Wagner teachers 'like friends' or 'like counselors'. Information contained in Tables 12, 13, and 14 demonstrates that the pupil-teacher relationship in Wagner was perceived as having predominantly positive qualities.

What factors contribute to the apparently closer and more rewarding student-teacher interaction in the vocational school? Goodman (1962) suggests that disenchanted-with-education youth need as their model people

> ...who can be respected because they know something or have some value; who pay attention and let themselves be attached to; and who play an exemplary role in the world that youth can learn to share (p. 129)...

Goodman's proposal referred to college attenders who rejected the impersonal, generalized teaching approach. There is no doubt, though, that educators with the above quoted attributes would be appreciated by, and beneficial to, learners of any age-group.

Many of the teachers at Wagner apparently possess the above mentioned traits; more specifically:

(1) They have knowledge and skills which are meaningful to their students.

(2) They are concerned with the youngsters' social, personal, and mental development. They provide for, and encourage, personal contacts and relationships.

(3) The majority of the Wagner teachers have been successful in work other than teaching (two-thirds of them are vocational teachers who have completed trade training and had years of experience in industry), in the very jobs that the students prepare themselves for. These teachers, then, are experts in their fields and have first-hand knowledge of, and connections with, the world of work which the youngsters soon hope to enter.

What Goodman (1962) envisioned as remedies for the alienated segment of pupils who rebelled against the conventional socialization in our educational institutions seems to have been accomplished in Wagner and might serve as an explanation for the more favourable student-teacher relationship.

Question 5: How do youngsters who have failed perceive their relationship with peers who have adequate achievement records in integrated school?

The subjects' reports on peer relationship in integrated school is summarized in Table 15, and demonstrates that referral to conditions

of low social acceptance in the classroom was made approximately three times as frequently as mentioning of being accepted by the group.

The girls described the larger number of stressful peer interactions, the low socio-economic female group reporting the most instances. The least examples of non-acceptance were produced by low socio-economic males.

Many studies on group dynamics concerned with persons of unequal ability state similar findings. Festinger (1954) concluded that persons who are regarded as different from the group one belongs to are usually avoided after a few initial contacts. The not-belonging aspect and therefore a reduced interaction pattern with deviants has also been confirmed by Rosenber, Spradlin, & Mabel (1961). It appears, then, that in the integrated classroom the low achievers are constantly made aware of their shortcomings and their undesirability, thus being kept in social isolation by their classmates.

Question 6: How do parents of grade failures respond to their children's segregation into Wagner?

The general sentiment of the parents about Wagner seemed to be that they were glad there was a school which their children liked to attend (and not resent, as before), and where their children got themselves involved in school work. With the exception of 11 pupils (Table 18) the participants of this study stated that their parents considered Wagner a 'good school' for the high school years of their offspring. Two of these 11 were boys, one from each of the two socio-economic groups. One of the nine girls who had spoken about parental disfavour of the Wagner school was a member of the other-than-low socio-economic group, eight were from the low socio-economic group.

Question 7: Pupils from Wagner School have been confronted with a rather negative evaluation which one incurs who attends this type of school. How do Wagner students cope with the stigma of the low achiever in a segregated school?

As Table 19 illustrated, the kinds of reactions Wagner students stated they make to derogatory references to their school were many. The responses range from convincing themselves that negative expressions are never made, or not meant seriously, to passive acceptance of unfriendly treatment, to being proud of Wagner and trying to change outsiders' opinions by stressing to themselves and others the purpose of this special school and in what important ways it has helped its attenders. It needs to be stated that the latter kind of response to unpleasant remarks about Wagner is the most prevalent one.

To what degree is Wagner attendance influenced by the negative treatment its students are known to receive from many community members? Wagner students, if they take the necessary steps, may return to the regular school system. There are few youngsters who make use of this option. Only after their three-year program at Wagner is completed, do a considerable number transfer to composite high schools to obtain a grade XII diploma. As far as prospective students are concerned, each year a greater number of qualifying low achievers apply for admission to Wagner. For the school year 1973/74, 40 percent more youngsters than Wagner can accommodate have registered. This is in direct contrast to other city high schools where the enrollment figures have been decreasing (Stetsko, 1973). It seems evident that the negative references made regarding Wagner students, even though they are resented, do not appear to affect its popularity with low achieving students.

One can conclude that the helpful reactions and rationalizations Wagner attenders have learned to use enable them to cope fairly adequately with the derogatory treatment of outsiders and to maintain a relatively acceptable self-concept.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Not all Edmonton students with failure patterns described in this study are transferred to W. P. Wagner. Many continue their education in a composite high school. It would be worthwhile to ascertain what the criterion is for assigning some pupils to a segregated school while others are retained in the integrated system.

As there are students with normal IQ who are low achievers (grade failures) in both of the before mentioned school settings, it would be of value to design a follow-up study for the two student groups five years after their school leaving date. It should be established what the work habits, earning power, and social and personal adjustments of these persons are at that time, in order to determine whether or not one school setting is superior to the other in preparing these youngsters for the job world.

Although the W. P. Wagner High School provides most low achievers with a chance to recover from their chronic failure complex, it does not break the failure pattern in all youngsters. Unfortunately, there is also a small group of students for whom Wagner seems to have come too late. An attempt should be made to discover what type of students, of what earlier experiences, might preclude adequate improvement in the segregated school.

The great majority of Wagner students became grade failures during their elementary school years. A pilot study designed to investigate to what extent these educational casualties could be averted should be in-

stituted. Students who start to have difficulties would be selected. The most appropriate time would be before the children have acquired the attitude that reading and/or arithmetic is hard and before teachers would have formed expectation regarding these children's achievement level. These youngsters would be assessed and randomly assigned to two groups. The experimental group would get maximum remedial assistance, whereas the control group would continue with the usual provision the school system has for learning handicapped youngsters.

As most Wagner students described their rapport with their teachers in the regular school as unsatisfactory, but reported to have been able to relate positively to most teachers in the vocational school, and investigation into the attributes of teachers at these two school settings seems desirable. Such a study should examine whether or not there is a difference between teachers whose career only includes teacher training and classroom experience and teachers who also have trained, worked, and proven themselves in other occupations beside teaching. The variables in such a research should be: the teachers' approach to students, their teaching style, and their general philosophy.

CONCLUSION

What did the school experience of the school failures consist of? In essence, none of these low achievers learned to master English or mathematics sufficiently during their elementary and junior high school years to enter academic high school. In each case it was a long struggle with little hope of success. The relationship with their teachers seemed to have been strained to a considerable extent by their poor performance record; students and teachers had failed each other. Relationship with classmates in integrated school were also frequently unsatisfactory;

humiliation and isolation resulted from not acquiring a certain level of school knowledge.

After many demoralizing school years, W. P. Wagner High School offered these youngsters a "normal school life" which had seemed unattainable to most of them in the regular school. In Wagner many of these youngsters realized they could cope well with the vocationally orientated academic subjects and make valuable contributions to the class. Teachers appreciated their efforts and 'treated them right', classmates were friendly and easy to associate with. There was one annoying problem; outsiders treated Wagner students as if they were different from youngsters attending regular high school. Nonetheless, most Wagner students were proud of their school and expressed that it considerably improved their attitude to learning, their personal adjustment and social habits.

There seems no doubt, Wagner affords a good second chance to low achievers. However, it is disturbing that such a large number of youngsters with normal intelligence develop into chronic grade failures in the regular school system. A concerted effort for earlier and more adequate prevention of such educational casualties is necessary.

When should prevention begin? Research indicates that more than half of a person's intellectual development takes place before the age of six (Bloom, 1954). It seems logical then that factors harmful to mental growth might also be at work during the early childhood years and that measures designed to prevent learning handicaps should extend to the preschool period. The two most familiar and relevant intervention attempts appear to be public nursery school programs and education of parents of nursery school attenders. The benefit of these programs is obvious, especially for youngsters from low socio-economic background.

Considering the characteristics of the integrated school teachers described by Wagner attenders, one hopes that teacher training would concentrate on developing more expert skills in teaching reading to elementary school teachers, and that prospective teachers would be made more aware of teacher behavior which tends to have long-lasting, detrimental effect on learning attitues of pupils, especially on the ones from the low socio-economic strata, thus further preventing educational failures.

Change in the school system is also indicated. If children can only profit from instruction if presented to small groups or individually, teacher aides might be utilized to allow the teacher to spend additional time with youngsters who are in greatest need of it. Smaller class size could also be a solution. Pupils who exhibit signs of learning or behavioral problems should be assigned to teachers whose attitudes and training equip them best to remedy the problem at an early stage. There might also be advantage in permitting low achievers to choose their own teacher, if they so desire. In short, more ways need to be tried to prevent and/or remedy learning handicaps.

If it is possible to provide a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning and positive social interaction for low achievers at Wagner, as the findings of this study indicate, one can justifiably assume that this should and could be accomplished in all schools and at any grade level. However beneficial Wagner appears to be for its attenders, it does not mitigate the fact that inadequate use was made of these students' years in the general school system, thus limiting their employment opportunities, which cannot easily, if at all, be rectified.

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